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OPINION METER
This week's poll:

Do you support the idea of privatizing the Commonwealth Health Center?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

NATION

U.S. Army opens up jobs in combat battalions to women soldiers.

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ENVIRONMENT

A webcam is now pointed at one of Yosemite National Park's attractions, the Yosemite Falls.

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"American Idol" viewers could be in for a serious case of deja vu.

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'Retirees punished for Fund's errors'

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» Ex-police major told to pay back almost $93K
» Senators eye legislative fix

The embattled NMI Retirement Fund may soon face lawsuits for its decision to require retirees to pay back overpayments arising from its own mistakes, including almost $93,000 for just one person, as well as for giving affected retirees only 30 days to appeal despite the fact that the Fund's board could not function at this time because of a lack of quorum, retirees and officials said yesterday.

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TAN HOLDINGS' DONATION CLARISSA V. DAVID

Employees of CTSI Logistics and Sablan Topline Co. unload the bed sheets donated by Tan Holdings Corp. to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., which runs the Commonwealth Health Center, yesterday morning. Tan Holdings president Jerry Tan led the presentation of the bed sheets and other items to corporation officials and hospital staff. The donation is expected to address the shortage of bedding materials at the island's only hospital.

Astronomers await transit of Venus

By FRANK WHELAN
THE MORNING CALL (ALLENTOWN, PA.)

ALLENTOWN, Pa.—Eighteenth century American astronomer David Rittenhouse got so excited over one he fainted when he saw it. His fellow Age of Reason stargazer Sir Edmund Halley, for whom the famous Halley's comet was named, thought it a tragedy that he would never see it. And Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon risked their lives to get the best view of it.

"It" is the transit of Venus, the passage of that planet in front of the sun—one of the rarest of astronomical events. Only five are known to have been observed by humans. They occurred in 1639, 1761, 1769, 1874, 1882, and 2004. The next will happen this year, on June 5 or 6, depending on the time zone. (Transits come in pairs that are eight years apart and separated by more than a century.) It

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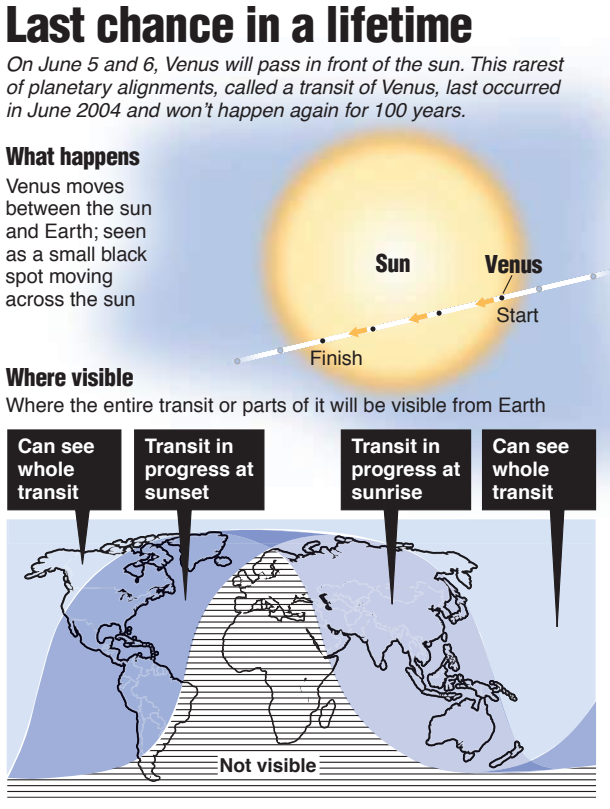
Last chance in a lifetime
On June 5 and 6, Venus will pass in front of the sun. This rarest of planetary alignments, called a transit of Venus, last occurred in June 2004 and won't happen again for 100 years.
What happens
Venus moves between the sun and Earth; seen as a small black spot moving across the sun
Sun
Venus
Start
Finish
Where visible
Where the entire transit or parts of it will be visible from Earth
Can see whole transit
Transit in progress at sunset
Transit in progress at sunrise
Can see whole transit
Not visible
When it will happen again
The transits occur in pairs with eight years separating the two events; the next pair of transits will occur only on Dec. 11, 2117, and Dec. 8, 2125
Use caution when viewing
• Do not look directly at the sun; can cause serious eye damage
• Use a small mirror or pinhole to reflect image for safe viewing
Source: NASA, American Astronomical Society
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Ex-DPS firefighter arrested in WA

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

» Same person tagged as 'person of interest' in disappearance of Luhk sisters

A former Department of Public Safety firefighter was recently arrested in Burien, Washington state for domestic violence.

Alan Santos Aguon has been at the King County jail since his arrest on May 8, 2012, a relative of Aguon's wife told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

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Local

CNMI govt joins move to dismiss Fund's bankruptcy petition

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The CNMI government has filed a motion to dismiss the NMI Retirement Fund's Chapter 11 bankruptcy petition.

The CNMI, through assistant attorney general Teresita J. Sablan, echoed the position of other parties in the case that the Fund is a government instrumentality and therefore not eligible to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

The U.S. District Court for the NMI Bankruptcy Division should dismiss the Fund's bankruptcy petition because the Fund does not fall within the definition of a person or entity eligible for Chapter 11 protection, said Sablan in the motion filed Wednesday.

Sablan said the CNMI government is an interested party in the proceeding since it created the Fund.

Sablan said the CNMI government believes that the Fund is an integral part of the Executive Branch of the government and wishes to restrain the Fund and its managers from taking actions that are beyond their powers or are contrary to Commonwealth law.

"Further, the government is the ultimate guarantor of government employee retirement benefits," the lawyer added.

Two unnamed clients of attorney Bruce Jorgensen's group first brought up the motion to dismiss the Chapter 11 proceedings on the grounds that the Fund's structure and statutory existence makes it clear that it is a "governmental unit" of the CNMI.

The U.S. Trustee followed Jorgensen's group's motion to dismiss on the same grounds.

Two retirees and members of the NMI Retirement Fund later joined the move to dismiss the bankruptcy petition.

Tan Holdings president Jerry Tan, right, smiles as he chats with chief executive officer Juan N. Babauta of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. yesterday at the presentation of bed sheets and other donated items to be used at the Commonwealth Health Center. CLARISSA V. DAVID

Tan Holdings donates linens to hospital

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
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REPORTER

The cash-strapped Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., which oversees the Commonwealth Health Center, received a major boost yesterday after Tan Holdings donated bed sheets and other bedding materials for use at the islands' only public hospital.

Tan Holdings president Jerry Tan led the presentation of 2,160 bed sheets, 424 pillow cases, 160 blankets, and 33 pieces of bed pads to corporation officials and hospital staff. The donated items came from the Saipan Grand Hotel, an affiliate of Tan Holdings, which is currently undergoing an 18-month renovation.

This marks the second donation of bed sheets and other bedding materials by Tan Holdings to the hospital. The company also donated linens from another affiliate, Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, about two or three years ago.

Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Juan N. Babauta welcomed the donation, saying it will aid the facility given their current financial crunch. "We appreciate it very much."

Corporation board chair Joaquin Torres said the donation is "very timely."

"It came at a time when we really need these items. These will go a long way in making sure that the hospital has adequate linens and can make patients comfortable and cared for," Torres told *Saipan Tribune*.

Karen Buettner, director of hospital services, said that the hospital is "in desperate need" of linens at this point since they only have two rotating amounts of linen.

"We're always scrounging to find extra so this is absolutely a fabulous donation and we're very excited about it," said Buettner. "This will allow us to have some in stock or have some in extra supply and that will be great for us."

According to Buettner, they lose their stock of linens for many reasons. Items used by patients that are sent off-island are no longer returned. In other times, patients who are discharged bring the linens with them. Also, linens get worn out faster due to the chemicals used to wash them.

Buettner disclosed that they were already planning to buy new linens and, in fact, have already sought quotes and estimates for about 75 dozens. Thanks to the donation, she said the corporation will be able to save at least $25,000 which, given their dire finances, is a significant amount.

"Because this is something that directly impacts our patient care on a day-to-day basis, it is a donation that we desperately need and we're very grateful to Tan Holdings," she said.

Tan Holdings' Jerry Tan said the hospital is the appropriate recipient of the donated items. "We're just happy that we're able to provide that assistance."

Lawyers Atalig, Yana suspended

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman suspended yesterday attorneys Antonio M. Atalig and Reynaldo O. Yana from practicing law in the CNMI for refusing to return $1.1 million in attorneys' fees that the two obtained from the Angel Malite estate.

Wiseman said the suspension will remain in place until Atalig and Yana have complied with certain conditions.

"The misconduct of [Atalig and Yana]…reflects adversely on an attorney's honesty, trustworthiness and fitness as a lawyer," Wiseman said.

He believes that the two's misconduct resulted in serious injuries to the legal profession, clients, the public, and the legal system in general through a disparagement of the administration of justice.

Wiseman required Atalig and Yana to pay at least 10 percent of the funds that they received as attorney fees and have been ordered disgorged. They each must present a proposed payment plan for their balance of the funds that they must pay back.

They were also ordered to pay the court for the costs of prosecuting this disciplinary matter and to pay to any and all clients any unearned retainer fees.

The disciplinary hearing was held on July 20, 2011. Atalig and Yana represented themselves in the proceedings. Attorney Thomas E. Clifford served as court-appointed disciplinary counsel.

The complaint alleged that Atalig and Yana violated provisions of the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct during their representation of clients and handling of estate funds.

Atalig and Yana were given $1,138,500 in contingency fee on May 28, 2006. On June 1, 2006, only three to four days later, the Malite heirs represented by attorney Stephen Nutting filed a motion for a restraining order for the two to return the fees.

The court granted Nutting's request, ordering Atalig and Yana to return the attorneys' fees, with a threat of contempt proceedings if they fail to do so. The two did not comply.

In his order yesterday, Wiseman said that both Atalig and Yana knew that the $1,138,500 contingency fee was in dispute.

"Notwithstanding the fact that

See LAWYERS on Next Page

Marines to provide free medical, dental services on Tinian

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

A group of doctors and health experts from the U.S. Marine Aircraft Group-12 now on Tinian for Exercise Geiger Fury 2012 will be providing free medical and dental services to Tinian residents.

Marine Lt. Cdr. and Dr. Matthew Doubrava, senior medical officer/group surgeon of MAG-12 out of Japan, said the Tinian medical mission team includes two doctors, one dentist, two dental technicians, and a nurse practitioner specializing in pediatrics.

Doubrava, who serves as the primary care provider for active duty personnel assigned to MAG-12, said he wants to make sure there's appropriate medical coverage for the expeditionary group on Tinian.

"And also we're going to volunteer our spare time in the clinic," he said in an interview on Tinian on Monday.

The medical practitioners have secured temporary licensing from the CNMI government to be able to provide health services on Tinian.

Freddy Hofschneider, acting resident director of Tinian Health Center, said in a phone interview Tuesday that they hope THC will be able to start accepting appointment requests by Thursday so that they would have an idea how many would want to avail of the free dental and medical services.

"In these tough times, these free dental and medical services from the U.S. Marines is greatly appreciated," Hofschneider said.

Hofschneider and the Marines medical team met yesterday to finalize the details of the medical and dental mission.

Hofschneider said THC will assign an individual that will receive appointment requests from the community.

Lt. Cdr. Aisha Bakkar, public affairs officers of the Marine Forces Pacific Guam and CNMI, said that it's a high priority to be able to provide community service to Tinian.

Doubrava said if THC does not have the supplies and the Marines can't provide them either, then the medical/dental team will only provide their time for certain cases. He said immunization will also be part of their services.

"It should be continuous… That's the idea, it should not be for one day only," he said.

Some 100 U.S. Marines are now on Tinian and another 100 or so will be arriving in the next few days for the largest military exercise in the CNMI in years.

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House confirms 3 nominees to CPUC without drug test results

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The House confirmed on Tuesday three of Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's nominees to the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission even before receiving the results of their drug test results.

Those confirmed by the House to CPUC were Joseph C. Guerrero representing Saipan; Zenie Palacios representing Tinian; and Oscar Patrick Quitugua representing Rota.

By a vote of 18-0, the House adopted the Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications chaired by Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan) recommending the confirmation of the three.

However, the PUTC said if the drug test result proves positive, the confirmation will be automatically rescinded.

CPUC nominees require the advice and consent of both the House and Senate.

Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian), chairman of the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Governmental Investigations, said his committee will hold a public hearing on the nomination of these three on Thursday at 10am.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Rota beaches red-flagged

The Division of Environment Quality has red-flagged the Kokomo Beach Club and Teweksbery Beach and is advising the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of these locations for the next 48 hours or until otherwise notified. DEQ said that samples collected from these locations had excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria (enterococci) that exceeded the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards. These bacteria can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water. Water samples were taken from 12 locations on Rota this week. For more information, contact DEQ at 664-8500. ***(DEQ)***

TES PTSA meeting Thursday

Tanapag Elementary School will have a PTSA meeting today, May 17, at 5:30pm in the school cafeteria. For more information contact the main office at 664-3425, 26, or 27. ***(PR)***

Marines, Air Force, Navy training on FDM

The U.S. Marine Corps, Air Force and Navy is conducting training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla on May 17-18, from 8am to 11pm. The public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots, and marine tour operators—are advised to stay clear from the area during the times and dates indicated. The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla training area will be on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants. ***(PR)***

Labor recognizes Tinian private sector employers

The Division of Employment and Training Services at the Tinian Department of Labor, along with Tinian Mayor Ramon M. Dela Cruz, will be recognizing local private sector employers who have in their employ local resident workers. The ceremony will take place during the Tinian Chamber of Commerce meeting today, May 17, at 10:30am, at the Fleming Restaurant. The event is part of the division's initiative to promote the hiring of more resident workers within the local private sector. ***(PR)***

Chamber to host currency training

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce will host a Credit Card and Currency Training session, presented by U.S. Secret Service trainers, on June 4, 2012, at 2pm.

As a result of a number of incidents recently where counterfeit currency has been seized in Guam and on Saipan, the U.S. Secret Service will be visiting Saipan to conduct a number of sessions for one day only, June 4, 2012.

SCC will notify all SCC members of the site for the training sessions as we approach June 4. The training sessions would be made available to Chamber members at no cost. There would be a nominal attendance fee for non-members. ***(SCC)***

RETIREES

From Page 1

Among the affected retirees now asking the government for help is Antonio O. Kiyoshi, a retired police major since December 1998, who is facing the prospect of having his pension slashed by up to 50 percent biweekly to pay for an alleged overpayment.

"Why would they punish me for their own mistake? I will appeal it, but I will run out of time because technically I only have 20 days to appeal and there's no board to begin with to address my appeal," Kiyoshi told *Saipan Tribune* via a long distance call from Arizona last night.

Kiyoshi worked for the Department of Public Safety on Tinian and Saipan for 20 years. He was shot in the back in the line of duty. He is diabetic and his one eye is blind, which is why he was let go from his new job in Arizona a few years back and now relies on his Fund pension.

"I ask that they give me 60 to 90 days to appeal. I got the letter only a few days ago but it's dated May 7. I also ask the Fund to not force to cut my check by up to 50 percent. That's too much to bear," he said.

Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian) also said it is "too much" for the Fund to force retirees like Kiyoshi to pay back overpaid benefits when it was the Fund that made the mistake in the first place.

"Assuming that this $93,000 overpayment is accurate, why did it take them 12 years to initiate the audit and punish the retirees for it? It's not their fault. I don't think the Fund understands the serious impact this will have on retirees like Mr. Kiyoshi, who may be relying only on his pension check to pay his house, his car, medicine and other basic needs," Cruz said.

Senate floor leader Pete Reyes (R-Saipan), in a separate interview, said he has heard of other retirees' complaints similar to Kiyoshi and the Fund will have to be prepared for possible lawsuits because of this.

"It's the Fund's mistake. They just recently discovered errors in their computations and they're now going after retirees. It's wrong to demand them to return these money when it was the Fund's fault," Reyes said.

Reyes said this is something that the Legislature could address by, among other things, introducing a bill that would block or prevent the Fund from asking retirees to return supposed overpayments resulting from the Fund's own mistakes.

"The Fund may be facing lawsuits because of this, and they have to prepare for it," Reyes added.

Kiyoshi said a cut in his pension as a result of overpayment is already tough, and further cuts as a result of the Fund's Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing will make matters worse. "God knows what this bankruptcy filing would do to our pensions," he added.

Richard Villagomez, Fund administrator, said in his May 7 letter to Kiyoshi that due to the "considerable amount of benefit overpayment" he has received, the Fund will deduct the maximum allowable of 50 percent of his corrected semi-monthly pension beginning June 15, 2012, pay period until the overpayment is fully paid.

He said a Fund audit revealed that Kiyoshi was "inappropriately given service credit instead of vesting credit" on his accumulated overtime/compensation time hours.

"This has resulted in an overpayment of benefits made to you since your initial retirement in December 1998," Villagomez told Kiyoshi.

Since this is an "adverse decision," Kiyoshi has the right to appeal the decision to the board.

"If you decide to appeal…your appeal must be received by the Fund within 30 days from the date of this letter. If you do not appeal within the time specified, it will mean that you agree with our findings and decision and no further administrative appeals will be allowed," Villagomez said in his letter.

The Commonwealth Retirees Association has yet to tackle this matter but is aware of such sentiments from some affected retirees, said CRA board director Diego Benavente, a former representative and lieutenant governor.

Sixto Igisomar, whose term as Fund board chair expired a few weeks ago, said yesterday that the audit initiated by the Fund while he was still with the board covered a handful of individuals and the amount of overpayment and underpayment was "substantial."

"I believe these people affected should air their concerns with the current board and the administrator. However, without a board, they could direct their concerns to the administrator who has been given authority to deal with much of the issues before the Fund," Igisomar said, pointing out that he is no longer a Fund board member.

In March this year, the Fund reported that it successfully collected $228,000 from its members who received overpayments and underpayments of benefits from February 2010 to February 2012.

It said $433,000 more could be potentially recouped once the internal audit is completed.

At the time, Igisomar as board trustee said that since the internal audit began more than a year ago, it has helped boost the Fund's revenue collection following the discovery of improper payouts and refunds to members and beneficiaries.

VENUS

From Page 1

will be Dec. 11, 2117, before another transit of Venus occurs again.

Before 2004, the last time the world witnessed a transit was in 1882, and many people were not quite sure exactly what was happening.

"Some were under the impression that the transit meant an eclipse of the sun," reported an Allentown, Pa., newspaper the day after the transit, "and waited patiently but in vain for the world to grow dark."

But astronomers had no doubt of what to expect and its importance. By helping to establish the distance between the earth and the sun, it enabled astronomers to estimate the distance between the Earth and the other planets. It was a question that had been debated since the ancient world had first began to wonder about the heavens.

But the transit of Venus also was significant in world and American history. It was not until the 17th century that mathematical tables were created that could accurately predict a transit of Venus. The first person known to observe one was the English astronomer Jeremiah Horrox in 1639. His friend William Crabtree, who lived several miles away, also saw it.

Halley made the transit of Venus a scientific holy grail. "The sight (of a transit of Venus)...is by far the noblest astronomy affords," he wrote. Halley, who died in 1742, never got to see a transit of Venus. But when the transit of Venus came around in 1761, thanks largely to the prestige Halley had given to it in scientific journals, it was an international event. Although England and France were fighting a war, they sent scientific teams to the far corners of the earth to record it.

The most successful English team was headed by astronomers Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon. Although blocked by delays that included an attack on their ship by a French man-of-war that left 11 dead, they eventually got to Africa's Cape of Good Hope and made excellent observations. The following year they made more history when they were called to North America to do a survey to settle a border dispute between the colonies of Maryland and Pennsylvania. The line the pair drew entered American history as the Mason-Dixon line, an informal border between north and south.

The 1769 transit of Venus was even more significant to American history. Rittenhouse, a self-taught scientist of Pennsylvania-German background (born in Germantown) who some regard as the founding father of American science, was selected by the American Philosophical Society to record the transit of Venus.

Just as Venus began its passage across the sun, Rittenhouse fainted for several minutes. He came to in time to make accurate observations.

Rittenhouse's results were among the first to arrive in London and were printed by the Royal Society. As a result, Rittenhouse became an international celebrity. Later, he became a prominent supporter of the Colonial cause during the American Revolution.

This year, you can watch the transit from the comfort of your living room via NASA's live remote webcast from atop Mauna Kea, Hawaii.

EX-DPS

From Page 1

A check with King County, however, indicated that Aguon was arrested on May 10, 2012, on felony charges of two counts of assault with a dangerous weapon and harassment in a domestic violence. His bail was set at $500,000 cash.

The former firefighter allegedly attacked his wife and one of his children with a chair. No other details of the incident were available as of yesterday.

Aguon is the same person referred to by former DPS commissioner Ramon Mafnas as the firefighter who refused to undergo a lie detector test in connection with the investigation into the disappearance of sisters Faloma and Maleina Luhk.

DPS investigators at the time refused to name the firefighter, saying only that he is a "person of interest."

Aguon resigned from DPS last year.

Sources said he sold his 2003 Toyota Camry before he left Saipan on Aug. 6, 2011, to reunite with his wife and children in Washington state.

In August 2011, FBI agents reportedly seized Aguon's car for evidence gathering. After the investigation, sources said, the agents returned the vehicle to the new owner.

Aguon's wife is related to the Luhk sisters.

Then 10-year-old Faloma and 9-year-old Maleina were reportedly last seen near a bus stop pavilion in As Teo on May 25, 2011.

FBI special agent Tom Simon late last year assured that the FBI's investigation into the mysterious disappearance of the Luhk sisters is ongoing.

LAWYERS

From Page 3

the motion to disgorge the fees placed them on clear and unequivocal notice that there was a dispute regarding the fees, they did not preserve, separate or safeguard the funds," Wiseman said.

Not only were the disputed fees not safeguarded nor separated, they were spent by the respondents who then evaded the court's order to account for the fees as to how they were spent, he said.

"Respondents were so unwilling and blatantly recalcitrant in cooperating with the court and providing an accounting of the funds…that they were placed in contempt of court and spent more than a year in jail rather than comply with the court's order," the judge said.

He said Atalig and Yana told the court that they had spent all of the $1,138,500 contingency fee, which is inconsistent with what was told to a reporter immediately after the hearing by Atalig who claimed he still had money left, but he was not going to say how much.

"Atalig's contradiction immediately after the hearing to a news reporter highlights the blatant disregard for the falsity of the statements given to the court," Wiseman said.

Atalig and Yana got out of the Department of Corrections on Dec. 24, 2009, after nearly one and one-half year in jail.

OIA's Babauta to Fitial: Return $3.5M to dump project in 2013

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Interior Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs Anthony M. Babauta told Gov. Benigno R. Fitial to replenish in fiscal year 2013 the $3.5 million that will be redirected from the Puerto Rico Dump closure project to the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. in fiscal year 2012.

This was part of Babauta's message to the governor when the OIA official approved Fitial's request to redirect $3.5 million in capital improvement project funds originally intended for the Puerto Rico Dump closure project to CUC, to be able to comply with a consent order.

"Recognizing the importance of addressing the closure of the [Puerto Rico Dump], I will nonetheless approve your requested redirection for [fiscal year] 2012. However, in [fiscal year] 2013, the [Puerto Rico Dump] project will be replenished by the same amount to ensure that the concerns of the Department of the Interior, Justice, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency continue to be addressed and that the [Puerto Rico Dump] project remains on schedule," Babauta told Fitial in a May 14 letter, a copy of which was obtained from the Fitial administration yesterday.

The administration issued a statement on Tuesday about OIA's approval of Fitial's request, but a copy of OIA's letter was not made available until yesterday.

Press secretary Angel Demapan, in an interview yesterday, said it's the Fitial administration's intent since the beginning to restore the funding for the Puerto Rico Dump project in fiscal year 2013.

The $3.5 million in redirected funding includes $87,294 previously given to the Puerto Rico Dump closure project in grant year 2006; $2,990,160 in 2007; and $422,546 in 2008.

The administration said the redirected funds will be used to assist CUC in complying with requirements of the EPA to meet consent order requirements.

In total, the CNMI has transferred in excess of $16.8 million in grant funds to CUC over the past several years.

Babauta accepted to Harvard 'Health Leadership Initiative'

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
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REPORTER

Chief executive officer Juan N. Babauta of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. is one of several state health officials who were recently accepted to the State Health Leadership Initiative of the Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education.

Babauta

Saipan Tribune learned that State Health Leadership Initiative program director Horace Ling informed Babauta of his acceptance to the "exciting professional development opportunity" which will be held from July 29 to Aug. 3.

Babauta said yesterday that he submitted an application after receiving an invitation to the program.

"We look at it as a continuing education that would give me experience to enhance my ability to be an effective administrator," said Babauta at the presentation ceremony of donated linens from Tan Holdings.

According to its website, Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education provides leaders in government, corporate and nonprofit sectors with the needed tools to address the most pressing issues in public leadership.

Its State Health Leadership Initiative is designed for state health officials to become better administrators, policy makers, and protectors of the public's health.

Babauta, a former governor, last year became the highest ranking official of the Healthcare Corp., which took over the operations of the former Department of Public Health.

CPA to announce Rota manager post next week

Noreen Sablan has been serving as acting manager of Rota International Airport and seaport since former manager Thomas Manglona's contract was terminated.

CPA executive director Edward Deleon Guerrero said in an interview yesterday that Sablan, who has been working for the agency as an administrative assistant, will serve in an acting capacity until the Commonwealth Ports Authority hires a new manager.

Deleon Guerrero terminated the contract of long-time Rota airport and seaport manager Thomas Manglona, whose employment contract was just renewed in March along with those of the Saipan and Tinian managers.

Manglona is the brother of Senate President Paul Manglona, who was recently engaged in a word war with Gov. Benigno R. Fitial.

Thomas Manglona's last day at work was on May 9.

Deleon Guerrero disclosed that they will announce the vacant post by next week "to find the most qualified person to take over" the managerial position.

"Our acting right now is an employee we have on board and she will serve just until the recruitment process is done," said Deleon Guerrero. ***(Clarissa V. David)***

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Saturday, May 19, 2012

6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Afetnas Regime
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Ana Glushko Academy
8:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Saipan Music & Dance
8:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Tinatak Dancers
9:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.	Inatuas
9:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	Maikai

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2. Hafadai Beach Hotel
3. Hyatt Regency Saipan
4. Pacific Islands Club Saipan
5. Canton Restaurant
6. Furusato Restaurant
7. Sierra Pearl Shakes
8. Capricciosa/Tony Roma's
9. D'Elegance Restaurant
10. Herman's Modern Bakery
11. Hula Girl/3's
12. Thai House Restaurant
13. Poon's Restaurant
14. Tropical Chill
15. Coral Ocean Point Resort

Beer Garden Vendors

- Pacific Trading Company (PTC)
- Marianas Pacific Distributors Incorporated (MARPAC)
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For more information, please contact the Marianas Visitors Authority Headquarters at telephone numbers 1 (670) 664-3200/01 or visit the website at www.mymarianas.com

Saipan Tinian Rota

2012 CNMI TOURISM MONTH
"Tourism is Everybody's Business"

"Hafa Adai Tirow" Spirit Island Wear Fridays

Every Friday in May is *Hafa Adai Tirow* Spirit Island Wear day! Show your island pride and culture by wearing island attire or local traditional wear. Post your photos on Facebook at "*Hafa Adai Tirow* Spirit Island Wear of the Northern Mariana Islands" and get a chance to win Taste of the Marianas tokens and a Tourism Month t-shirt; one lucky winner per week will be chosen from all who post photos.

"My Marianas" Community Outreach Presentation

Get up-to-date on the latest industry trends and upcoming tourism events during this picturesque slideshow on Saturday evenings at the Taste of the Marianas. Tourism Month informational packages will also be available on-site.

On-the-Street Interviews

MVA turns the spotlight on you as random community members are given an opportunity to share their views on various tourism topics in the Tourism Tuesday feature of the Saipan Tribune.

Radio Tourism Trivia

Call in with the correct answer for your chance to win tokens for the Taste of the Marianas and Tourism Month T-shirts. "Did You Know?" and "Fun Facts about Tourism in the Northern Marianas" will be aired regularly throughout the month on Power 99 (99.5 FM), KZMI (103.9 FM) and KKMP (1440 AM and 92.1 FM).

Taste of the Marianas Competitions

Bartenders' Cocktail Competition
7:00pm
at the rear stage area

Fitial withdraws 3 nominations

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial withdrew on Monday and Tuesday three of his recent nominations to the NMI Retirement Fund board, Commonwealth Election Commission and Board of Professional Licensing, but press secretary Angel Demapan said yesterday that these were the result of the nominees' decision to decline the appointments.

"They cited personal reasons for declining the nominations," Demapan said.

The three withdrawn nominations were those of Juan S. Torres to serve a four-year term on the Fund board representing Saipan; Candido I. Castro to serve as a member of BPL representing Saipan as a surveyor; and Joseph P. Rosario to serve on the Commonwealth Election Commission representing Saipan.

Their appointments require the Senate's advice and consent.

Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) acknowledged receiving the governor's letter withdrawing his nominations of the three. He said it is unusual for three nominees to be withdrawn, but that he respects the governor's decision to do so.

Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian), chairman of the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations, said yesterday there's not much to say about the withdrawal of the nominations because it is the governor's prerogative to do so.

Fitial also recently recalled his renomination of former Fund board chair Sixto Igisomar so he could re-appoint him. The Senate EAGI Committee was poised to recommend rejecting Igisomar's nomination. ***(Haidee V. Eugenio)***

Judge: Plea accord offered to sex abuse suspect 'too lenient'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Superior Court Presiding Judge Robert C. Naraja has rejected the plea agreement the prosecution is offering a man accused of sexually abusing two girls, saying the recommended sentence of 29 months is "too lenient."

"There is a great concern that granting too lenient of a sentence in this case will undermine our community's campaign against child abuse by negating the valuable deterrent effect that a harsh punishment carries," Naraja said.

Marcelino Carlos Jr. has been in jail since December 2009. His trial will begin on May 29, 2012, at 9am.

Under the proposed plea agreement, the 42-year-old Carlos would plead guilty to two counts of sexual abuse of a minor in the second degree.

Naraja, however, does not feel that the plea agreement is just in view of the proposal that Carlos will serve 10 years in prison, all suspended except for 29 months, with credit for time served.

Naraja said that under the agreement, Carlos, a Filipino, would be deported in June 2012, which means he will serve only a very short time in prison compared to the seriousness of his crimes.

Naraja said the circumstances surrounding the charges are especially egregious because of the severe trauma a victim usually endures when there exists a "special relationship between the perpetrator and victim."

In supporting the plea agreement, assistant attorney general Eileen Wisor said the two child victims are presently living in Guam and would prefer not to testify.

"Given the CNMI is in a state of grave fiscal uncertainty, this plea agreement serves to facilitate the defendant's removal, prevent chance encounters with the victims ensuring their safety, and save the CNMI in excess of $30,000 per year—in total $165,000 at a minimum," Wisor said.

Police said Carlos allegedly sexually abused a girl when she was then 8 or 9 years old. Carlos also allegedly sexually abused another teenager when she was just 8.

Carlos is represented by chief public defender Adam Hardwicke and assistant public defender Daniel Guidotti.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works
2nd Floor Joeten Commercial Building, Gualo Rai, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
DPW/FHWA-12-RFP-004

PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING DESIGN FOR ROUTE 30 SAFETY IMPROVEMENT, Project No. CM-NH-0030 (010)

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Eloy S. Inos, through the Department of Public Works (DPW), are soliciting sealed proposals for the Preliminary Engineering Design for Route 30 Safety Improvement on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This procurement is made in accordance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001, however, Article 7, "Local Business Preference", as amended by Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, is not available because its use is prohibited by Federal Law granting the funding for this project. Proposal procedures shall be in full compliance with **§70-30.3-305** of the regulations.

Prior to being awarded a design contract, the firm or company must have or obtain a valid Certificate of Authorization (COA) from the CNMI Board of Professional Licensing, and must have a Resident Engineer or Principal-In-Charge for the contract Information about obtaining a COA may be requested from Ms. Florence C. Sablan, Executive Director, at (670) 234-5897/5898 or fax (670) 234-6040.

For any contract or subcontract related to engineering or design of a construction project funded in whole or in part with Federal-aid Highway funds, the bid or proposal submitted for the contract, is required to show what the indirect cost (overhead cost not associated with any one particular project defined under 48 CFR §31.203) associated with the project are, to state how the indirect cost figure was reached, and to certify (pursuant to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Order No. 4470.1A that they are allowable costs under 48 CFR §31.2.

The RFP Package and Scope of Work is available on or after **May 10, 2012** at the Department of Public Works, Office of the Secretary, 2nd Floor, Joeten Commercial Building, Gualo Rai Saipan. A mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Gualo Rai Commercial Building on **May 29, 2012**. Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division, Building 1353, Mednilla Avenue Capitol Hill, Saipan, or faxed to (670) 234-3547 no later than 4:30 p.m. local time **June 14, 2012**.

Proposers must submit with their proposal a Project Approach and Schedule of Completion, which details how the work will be accomplished by the consultants, given the time requirements and resources available as identified in their proposals.

Proposers shall also submit a separate statement of qualifications (résumés and experience). The total proposal submitted shall be no more than twenty five (25) pages in length. Note that a firm, which submits a proposal as a prime consultant, cannot submit as a subcontractor on another proposal. However, only subcontractors may be included in multiple proposals by different consultants.
Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Qualifications of the principal(s) and staff assigned to the project – 25%
2. Experience and past performance of the firm(s) on similar type projects – 25%
3. Project Approach – 20%
4. Schedule of Completion – 30%

Discussion will be conducted with at least three of the firms regarding the contract requirement and technical approach and selection made therefore, in order of preference, of no less than three firms determined to be the most highly qualified to perform the services required. Fee proposals are solicited, however, this information shall not be considered in the selection of the most highly qualified firm. Such Fee Proposals may be used in determining a fair and reasonable price.

Sealed proposals must be marked **"DPW/FHWA-12-RFP-004"**. For Proposers within the CNMI, one original and five (5) copies of proposals must be submitted no later than 10:00 a.m. local time, **June 20, 2012** to the Office of the Director, Division of Procurement & Supply, Lower Base, Saipan. Proposers located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their proposal by submitting a Notice of Intent to Propose. Notices of Intent to Propose must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. local time, **June 20, 2012**, and may be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For Proposers located outside the CNMI, one original and five (5) copies of sealed proposals must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **June 20, 2012** AND must be received no later than **July 3, 2012**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a proposal.

These projects are funded in part through a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. Contract award is contingent upon funding approval by the Department of Transportation (DOT).

All responses to this RFP should take into account any and all taxes that will be charged to the proposer(s) awarded a contract for the project, including excise tax.

The government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any imperfections in any proposal if, in its opinion to do so, would be in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of the CNMI government.

/S/ VICENTE B. CASTRO
Acting Secretary of Public Works

/S/HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director of Procurement & Supply

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works
2nd Floor Joeten Commercial Building, Gualo Rai, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
DPW/FHWA-12-RFP-005

PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING DESIGN FOR ROUTE 302 IMPROVEMENT, Project No. CM-NH-0302 (001)

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Eloy S. Inos, through the Department of Public Works (DPW), are soliciting sealed proposals for the Preliminary Engineering Design for Route 30 Safety Improvement on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This procurement is made in accordance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001, however, Article 7, "Local Business Preference", as amended by Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, is not available because its use is prohibited by Federal Law granting the funding for this project. Proposal procedures shall be in full compliance with **§70-30.3-305** of the regulations.

Prior to being awarded a design contract, the firm or company must have or obtain a valid Certificate of Authorization (COA) from the CNMI Board of Professional Licensing, and must have a Resident Engineer or Principal-In-Charge for the contract Information about obtaining a COA may be requested from Ms. Florence C. Sablan, Executive Director, at (670) 234-5897/5898 or fax (670) 234-6040.

For any contract or subcontract related to engineering or design of a construction project funded in whole or in part with Federal-aid Highway funds, the bid or proposal submitted for the contract, is required to show what the indirect cost (overhead cost not associated with any one particular project defined under 48 CFR §31.203) associated with the project are, to state how the indirect cost figure was reached, and to certify (pursuant to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Order No. 4470.1A that they are allowable costs under 48 CFR §31.2.

The RFP Package and Scope of Work is available on or after **May 10, 2012** at the Department of Public Works, Office of the Secretary, 2nd Floor, Joeten Commercial Building, Gualo Rai Saipan. A mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Gualo Rai Commercial Building on **May 29, 2012**. Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division, Building 1353, Mednilla Avenue Capitol Hill, Saipan, or faxed to (670) 234-3547 no later than 4:30 p.m. local time **June 14, 2012**.

Proposers must submit with their proposal a Project Approach and Schedule of Completion, which details how the work will be accomplished by the consultants, given the time requirements and resources available as identified in their proposals.

Proposers shall also submit a separate statement of qualifications (résumés and experience). The total proposal submitted shall be no more than twenty five (25) pages in length. Note that a firm, which submits a proposal as a prime consultant, cannot submit as a subcontractor on another proposal. However, only subcontractors may be included in multiple proposals by different consultants.
Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Qualifications of the principal(s) and staff assigned to the project – 25%
2. Experience and past performance of the firm(s) on similar type projects – 25%
3. Project Approach – 20%
4. Schedule of Completion – 30%

Discussion will be conducted with at least three of the firms regarding the contract requirement and technical approach and selection made therefore, in order of preference, of no less than three firms determined to be the most highly qualified to perform the services required. Fee proposals are solicited, however, this information shall not be considered in the selection of the most highly qualified firm. Such Fee Proposals may be used in determining a fair and reasonable price.

Sealed proposals must be marked **"DPW/FHWA-12-RFP-005"**. For Proposers within the CNMI, one original and five (5) copies of proposals must be submitted no later than 10:00 a.m. local time, **June 20, 2012** to the Office of the Director, Division of Procurement & Supply, Lower Base, Saipan. Proposers located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their proposal by submitting a Notice of Intent to Propose. Notices of Intent to Propose must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. local time, **June 20, 2012**, and may be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For Proposers located outside the CNMI, one original and five (5) copies of sealed proposals must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **June 20, 2012** AND must be received no later than **July 3, 2012**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a proposal.

These projects are funded in part through a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. Contract award is contingent upon funding approval by the Department of Transportation (DOT).

All responses to this RFP should take into account any and all taxes that will be charged to the proposer(s) awarded a contract for the project, including excise tax.

The government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any imperfections in any proposal if, in its opinion to do so, would be in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of the CNMI government.

/S/ VICENTE B. CASTRO
Acting Secretary of Public Works

/S/HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director of Procurement & Supply

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works
2nd Floor Joeten Commercial Building, Gualo Rai, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
DPW/FHWA-12-RFP-006

PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING DESIGN FOR ROUTE 103 IMPROVEMENT, Project No. CM-NH-3103 (001)

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Eloy S. Inos, through the Department of Public Works (DPW), are soliciting sealed proposals for the Preliminary Engineering Design for Route 30 Safety Improvement on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This procurement is made in accordance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001, however, Article 7, "Local Business Preference", as amended by Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, is not available because its use is prohibited by Federal Law granting the funding for this project. Proposal procedures shall be in full compliance with **§70-30.3-305** of the regulations.

Prior to being awarded a design contract, the firm or company must have or obtain a valid Certificate of Authorization (COA) from the CNMI Board of Professional Licensing, and must have a Resident Engineer or Principal-In-Charge for the contract Information about obtaining a COA may be requested from Ms. Florence C. Sablan, Executive Director, at (670) 234-5897/5898 or fax (670) 234-6040.

For any contract or subcontract related to engineering or design of a construction project funded in whole or in part with Federal-aid Highway funds, the bid or proposal submitted for the contract, is required to show what the indirect cost (overhead cost not associated with any one particular project defined under 48 CFR §31.203) associated with the project are, to state how the indirect cost figure was reached, and to certify (pursuant to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Order No. 4470.1A that they are allowable costs under 48 CFR §31.2.

The RFP Package and Scope of Work is available on or after **May 10, 2012** at the Department of Public Works, Office of the Secretary, 2nd Floor, Joeten Commercial Building, Gualo Rai Saipan. A mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Gualo Rai Commercial Building on **May 29, 2012**. Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division, Building 1353, Mednilla Avenue Capitol Hill, Saipan, or faxed to (670) 234-3547 no later than 4:30 p.m. local time **June 14, 2012**.

Proposers must submit with their proposal a Project Approach and Schedule of Completion, which details how the work will be accomplished by the consultants, given the time requirements and resources available as identified in their proposals.

Proposers shall also submit a separate statement of qualifications (résumés and experience). The total proposal submitted shall be no more than twenty five (25) pages in length. Note that a firm, which submits a proposal as a prime consultant, cannot submit as a subcontractor on another proposal. However, only subcontractors may be included in multiple proposals by different consultants.
Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Qualifications of the principal(s) and staff assigned to the project – 25%
2. Experience and past performance of the firm(s) on similar type projects – 25%
3. Project Approach – 20%
4. Schedule of Completion – 30%

Discussion will be conducted with at least three of the firms regarding the contract requirement and technical approach and selection made therefore, in order of preference, of no less than three firms determined to be the most highly qualified to perform the services required. Fee proposals are solicited, however, this information shall not be considered in the selection of the most highly qualified firm. Such Fee Proposals may be used in determining a fair and reasonable price.

Sealed proposals must be marked **"DPW/FHWA-12-RFP-006"**. For Proposers within the CNMI, one original and five (5) copies of proposals must be submitted no later than 10:00 a.m. local time, **June 20, 2012** to the Office of the Director, Division of Procurement & Supply, Lower Base, Saipan. Proposers located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their proposal by submitting a Notice of Intent to Propose. Notices of Intent to Propose must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. local time, **June 20, 2012**, and may be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For Proposers located outside the CNMI, one original and five (5) copies of sealed proposals must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **June 20, 2012** AND must be received no later than **July 3, 2012**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a proposal.
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/S/ VICENTE B. CASTRO
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Tan: MVA should be adequately funded

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With tourism as the CNMI's only industry, the Marianas Visitors Authority should be adequately funded to sustain its marketing and promotion efforts, according to Tan Holdings president Jerry Tan.

Tan said Tuesday that MVA, the economic engine of the islands, has been way underfunded, making it unable to compete with rival destinations in terms of marketing the Commonwealth.

"We must support MVA and fund [it] properly and sufficiently to allow [it] to do a good job. As you know, we're not alone," he said.

While he recognizes the local government's financial difficulties, Tan maintained that other destinations like Guam and Hawaii are also suffering from the same economic downturn yet "they put out a lot of money to market their destination.

He said it is crucial for CNMI to catch up with these other destinations. "All the other competing destinations are spending millions of dollars promoting their places… We must also be out there aggressively promoting the CNMI in our key markets, which are Japan, China, Korea, and Russia," he added.

Tan, former MVA board chair, said that insufficient funding has made it "very difficult" to advertise the CNMI as a destination for tourists.

MVA's budget submission for fiscal year 2013 is at $11.6 million.

According to Tan, the government should start taking a careful look at getting MVA the funding it needs to promote the islands and in turn revive its "only industry."

Tan, whose company will be launching Saipan Air on July 1, said the government cannot survive just by cutting costs. He stressed the need to increase revenues as well.

Military families get free pass to nat'l parks, public lands

YORKTOWN, Va.—As part of the Joining Forces initiative to support the nation's service members and their families, several U.S. government agencies will announce an annual pass to active duty service members and their dependents, granting free access to more than 2,000 national parks, wildlife refuges, national forests, and other public lands around the nation in the coming years.

"First lady Michelle Obama and I started the Joining Forces initiative last year as a way to honor, recognize and support our veterans and military families," said Dr. Jill Biden. "This effort is a wonderful way to give something back, giving our military men and women and their families a chance to reconnect with their loved ones, experience the beauty of this country, and simply have a little fun."

Beginning on Armed Forces Day on May 19, active duty service men and women—Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and activated National Guard and Reserves—can obtain the new military version of the America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands Annual Pass. The pass will be accepted at National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Army Corps sites that charge entrance or standard amenity fees.

The initiative was announced yesterday during a ceremony at Colonial National Historical Park in Yorktown, Virginia where Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, Director of the National Park Service Jonathan B. Jarvis and Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Jo-Ellen Darcy distributed the first passes to one member from each of the military's five branches.

ON THE NET
http://store.usgs.gov/pass/index.html

"Our nation owes a debt of gratitude to our service men and -women who make great sacrifices and put their lives on the lines to protect our country and preserve our freedom," Secretary Salazar said. "In recognition of their contributions and service, we are putting out a welcome mat for these brave men and women and their families at America's most beautiful and storied sites."

"Our country's iconic memorials, open spaces, and majestic landscapes provide inspiration for those serving in the military, especially those far from home," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, whose agency oversees national forests. "In appreciation for their service, we want to encourage these men and women and their families to visit and enjoy America's wondrous lands and waterways."

"Our soldiers, sailors and airmen give so much to this country. The federal family is honored to thank them for their service by offering them an opportunity to visit the natural resources that they defend," said Assistant Secretary Darcy. "The Corps is proud to be participating in the program by accepting the America the Beautiful Military Pass at Corps recreation facilities."

Military members and their dependents can pick up a pass at any national park or wildlife refuge that charges an entrance fee or other selected sites. Members must show a current, valid military identification card to obtain their pass. The pass is also available to dependents of active duty personnel.

Yesterday's announcement complements the Joining Forces Initiative launched by the first lady and Dr. Biden, a national initiative to mobilize all sectors of society to give service members and families the opportunities and support they have earned. In just its first year, Joining Forces has rallied American businesses to hire tens of thousands of veterans and military spouses, schools have improved educational opportunities for military children, and the medical community has vowed better care for military families.

Where there are entrance fees, the pass covers the owner and accompanying passengers in a single, private, non-commercial vehicle at recreation sites that charge per vehicle. At sites where per-person entrance fees are charged, it covers the pass owner and three accompanying adults age 16 and older. There is no entry fee for children 15 and under.

While the pass is not available to veterans and retirees, many of these individuals are eligible for other discounted passes, such as the Senior Pass, granting lifetime access to U.S. citizens over 62 for $10, and the Access Pass granting free lifetime access for permanently disabled U.S. citizens. ***(DOI)***

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhc.gov.mp

AMENDMENT # 01
PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairwoman of the Board, is hereby giving notice that the Special Meeting of the Board is scheduled on **Thursday, May 17, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. at the NMHC Conference Room, Garapan, Saipan.** The public is welcome to submit written or oral comments regarding the agenda below. Individuals interested in attending the meeting and needing special accommodations are requested to contact NMHC in advance.

I. PRELIMARY MATTERS
a. Call to Order
b. Roll Call
c. Adoption of Agenda
d. Adoption of Minutes:
February 23, 2012 Regular Board Meeting
March 09, 2012 Special Board Meeting.
II. PUBLIC COMMENTS
III. ACTING CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
a. Garapan Annex RFP
b. Personnel Matters
c. Update on Thirty-Two (32) former RD Properties
d. QAP 2012
e. REO's for Sale (003 D 16, 003 D 22, 001 C 57)
f. Multifamily Renewal
g. CDBG/CDBG-R Updates
h. ESG Updates
i. Fiscal RFP
IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION
V. OTHER MATTERS
VI. ADJOURNMENT

(Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a) (7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)

/s/ MARCIE M. TOMOKANE
Chairwoman of the Board

United States District Court for the
Northern Mariana Islands,
Bankruptcy Division

NORTHERN MARIANNA ISLANDS
RETIREMENT FUND

Bankruptcy Case No. 12-00003

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the United States Trustee's Motion to Dismiss Case ("motion") is set for hearing on June 1, 2012, at 9:30 a.m. The motion sets forth the grounds regarding why the United States Trustee has determined that the Debtor is ineligible to be a chapter 11 debtor, and accordingly, has requested that the case be dismissed. The full contents of the motion is on file with the Court, and a copy can be obtained from the Court. Any response or opposition to the motion must be filed with the Court on or before May 18, 2012 (14 days before the hearing) at: U.S. District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands , 2nd Floor, Horiguchi Building, Garapan, P.O. Box 500687, Saipan, MP 96950 USA
If you mail your response to the Court, you must mail it early enough so the Court will receive it on or before the deadline stated above. The Court may disregard any response filed untimely. You must also mail or transmit a copy of any response or opposition to the moving party at: Office of the United States Trustee, Attn: Curtis Ching, Asst. U.S. Trustee, 1132 Bishop Street, Suite 602, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813.
If you fail to file a response to this motion within such time period, the Court may treat such failure as a waiver of your right to oppose the motion and may grant the requested relief.

Dated: Honolulu, Hawaii May 9, 2012,

Terri H. Didion,
Trial Attorney for U.S. Trustee

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

May 17, 2000

Lang: Abortion is illegal in CNMI
Abortion is illegal in the Northern Marianas as provided under the CNMI Constitution unless both the Commonwealth and U.S. judicial systems decide otherwise, according to former Gov. Froilan C. Tenorio. Belittling a legal opinion issued in 1995 when he was the governor, Mr. Tenorio said that view was "flawed" on several grounds as the Constitution bans abortion on the island "until our courts say otherwise." Based on the legal analysis written by former Attorney General Richard Weil and Assistant Attorney General Celeste Andersen on March 10, 1995, a woman's right to have an abortion in the CNMI is guaranteed under the Covenant, the U.S. Constitution, Supreme Court case law, the CNMI Constitution and the federal statutory law.

PSS busing service appeals for community cooperation
The Public School System Pupil Transportation Services is asking the PSS administration to restrict students' bus pick-up to cover only primary roads. This is to mitigate further damage Saipan's secondary rough roads have done to the poor state of PSS' old buses, according to Administrative Service's Jess Sanchez. Mr. Sanchez is urging parents to meet PSS halfway by having the children ready on bus stops located at primary roads nearest them.

May 17, 2001

CPA needs $40M to fund 5-year plan
The Commonwealth Ports Authority is seeking financial and technical assistance from the US Department of Transportation for the realization of its five-year airport improvement masterplan. Executive Director Carlos H. Salas said about $40 million will be needed to effectively carry out CPA's priority infrastructure projects on Saipan, Tinian and Rota. Mr. Salas said the transportation department promised to help CPA with its proposed terminal expansion projects for the Saipan, Tinian and Rota international airports. Under the five-year plan, CPA will carry out major improvements in all of the three islands' air transport facilities, with Saipan needing $29 million, Rota would need $1 million and Tinian would require about $10 million.

DPW generates $200k from tipping fees
Implementation of the tipping system in Puerto Rico dump generated more than $200,000 in additional government revenues since late last year, according to the Department of Public Works. Solid Waste Division Director John Harder said the imposition of tipping fees since October provided DPW additional funds to handle maintenance and operational costs of the dumpsite. Fees imposed largely depend on garbage tonnage and household refuse were given discounted rates. Minimum fee is pegged at $10 per ton. The money was deposited to the Commonwealth General Fund. Money collected out of tipping fees is used to defray maintenance, personnel and operational expenditures.

May 17, 2002

NMI on alert vs Korean FMD
With the outbreak of the foot-and-mouth disease in South Korea, the Department of Lands and Natural Resources yesterday said quarantine personnel are on alert to prevent contaminated beef from coming into the CNMI. But Marianne Teregeyo, the DLNR's public information officer, quickly clarified that quarantine personnel are always on alert, even without the South Korea outbreak. The Korean situation has prompted House Rep. Stanley Torres to write a letter to Gov. Juan N. Babauta about this, to prevent contaminated meat products from coming into the Commonwealth. In a letter to Babauta dated yesterday, Torres asked the Governor whether or not to worry about the South Korean outbreak of the FMD disease-an animal disease that primarily affects pigs and cows.

Lawmakers cut work hours of staff
Following the lead of House Speaker Heinz S. Hofschneider, two other lawmakers have also begun instituting austerity measures in their respective offices, including cutting down the working hours of their respective staffs. Reps. Martin B. Ada and Oscar M. Babauta both disclosed that they have cut down the working hours of their staff from eight hours a day to just six hours daily. This effectively means that the offices of both lawmakers will open at 7:30am and close down two hours early at 2:30pm.

CHC makes partial $231.8K payment to CUC

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. paid a fraction of its outstanding obligation to the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. this month.

Charles Warren, CUC chief financial officer, confirmed Tuesday that they received payment from the corporation in the amount of $231,844.33 on May 8. The disbursement cuts down by almost 9 percent the corporation's past due obligations, which is now at $2.48 million.

Saipan Tribune learned that CUC used the money to buy fuel.

"CUC recognizes the financial challenges currently being faced by CHC and is looking forward to the resolution of those challenges so that payments of CHC's obligations to CUC can be made on a more timely and regular basis," Warren said via email.

For his part, CUC executive director Abe Malae said they appreciate the corporation's partial payment.

"I am confident that the grant eligible accounts at CHC are ready for processing given the time and effort expended by the Public Health management staff," said Malae.

He added that the corporation now has more flexibility with its power supply after technicians of both agencies secured a backup supply from the hospital's generator.

Necesito tops 'Taste'—again

MVA

Post pie-eating at the Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival on May 12, 2012, winners take a breather for a quick photo before collecting their cash prizes. From left are first place winner Simon Jed Necesito, second place winner Andrew Jon Songsong, and third place winner Seo Hyun Hwang. The festival is held every Saturday evening during May Tourism Month at American Memorial Park in Saipan.

Saipan resident Simon Jed Necesito is getting his fill of this month's 14th Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival and Beer, topping the Pie-eating Competition last Saturday, May 12, just a week after winning the youth division of the Hotdog Eating Competition for the second year in a row.

The Taste of the Marianas is held every Saturday during May Tourism Month beginning at 6pm throughout the month at American Memorial Park. Local hotels and restaurants offer fine fare at a reasonable fare, with most dinner items at $6 or less. Throughout the evening, live entertainment is offered on the main stage while secondary entertainment and competitions will take place at the secondary stage.

This coming Saturday's entertainment lineup will include Afetnas Regime, Ana Glushko Academy, Saipan Music & Dance, Tinatak Dancers, INATUAS, and Maikai. Also, the annual Bartenders' Cocktail Competition featuring flavor, flair, and festive costumes kicks off at 7pm at the rear stage.

Joining Necesito in winners circle were second place finisher Andrew Jon Songsong and third place finisher Seo Hyun Hwang, both of Saipan. The contenders won $50, $30, and $20 respectively for their pie-eating performance.

"This year, we offered our first Pie-eating Competition with apple pie," said Community Projects manager Martin Duenas of the Marianas Visitors Authority. "We would like to extend our appreciation to Herman's Bakery for co-sponsoring this and the hot dog eating event held on the first night of the Taste of the Marianas"

The Chefs' Competition on May 26 will pit hotel chefs in a cook-off highlighting a select cut of Certified Angus Beef and local ingredients. Arts and crafts will also be on sale each evening. ***(MVA)***

Discounted rates offered for Zumba class at NMC

The Northern Marianas College through the Community Development Institute (CDI) is offering discounted rates for individuals who wish to take a short-term Zumba course that begins this Friday, May 18, 2012.

The fee for the Zumba course has been reduced to $45 per individual if participants refer one individual to register for the course, which equates to $5 per class session. This discount will also be given to the individuals referred. However, the course fee is $90 for those who do not refer others to take the course.

Zumba is a popular fitness program inspired by Latin dance. It is marketed as "an exhilarating, effective, easy-to-follow, Latin-inspired, calorie-burning dance fitness-party" (www.zumba.com). Zumba consists of various aerobic exercises that also tone and sculpt the body.

These courses are offered as part of the College's mission to provide customized, continuing educational, professional development instruction, as well as personal enrichment opportunities in response to community needs.

The Zumba course will begin on Friday, May 18, 2012, and will continue every Monday and Friday until the last day on June 15, 2012. The schedule is 5pm to 6pm at the NMC As Terlaje campus.

It is recommended that all interested individuals register before the start of the first day of class. Full payment is required for admission to a class.

To register, or for information about these courses, visit the CDI Office in Building P on the NMC Campus in As Terlaje or call 234-5498 ext. 1005/1010/1019 or e-mail Orrin Pharmin at orrinp@nmcnet.edu. ***(PR)***

Reena Patel is OAG's newest lawyer

Reena J. Patel was sworn in by acting chief justice Alexandro C. Castro on Tuesday, May 15, as the newest assistant attorney general at the Civil Division of the Office of the Attorney General.

Patel graduated from law school in 2008 from Thomas Jefferson School of Law in San Diego, Calif., and previously worked in private practice specializing in business transactions. She moved to Saipan last month with her fiancé, assistant attorney general James McCallister, who was sworn in earlier this year and is working at the Criminal Division of the Attorney General's Office.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From right, acting chief justice Alexandro C. Castro, newly sworn in assistant attorney general Reena J. Patel, assistant attorney general James McCallister, and Attorney General Edward T. Buckingham.

Patel was also accompanied at the swearing-in ceremony in the CNMI Supreme Court courtroom by Attorney General Edward T. Buckingham. ***(CNMI Judiciary)***

RECOGNITION

Floyd ER Masga, acting director of the Community Development Institute at the Northern Marianas College, receives an award of recognition from the University of Guam Senior Reserve Officers Training Corps Professor of Military Science Lt. Col. Scott L. Bartley. Masga was recognized in front of almost 200 cadets, guests, family members, and distinguished visitors for his tireless efforts in promoting the program and providing opportunities for cadets at the Northern Marianas College and throughout the CNMI. The award was presented to Masga at the program's Spring Military Ball held on May 11, 2012, at the Sheraton Laguna Guam Resort. Masga is the liaison and direct link between NMC and the University of Guam's SROTC Program. To date, Masga has mentored and guided at least eight NMC cadets to their pathway toward commissioning as second lieutenants in the U.S. Army.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS

Belated happy birthday to Breana Ysabel, who celebrated her fifth birthday at the Shirley's Restaurant and Coffee Shop in Susupe on May 11,2012.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy 7th birthday to Jylon Joseph! We love you very much. May your day be filled with lots of joy and may the good Lord bless you with many more years to come. From Mommy, Ardonn, and Keanalise.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy 14th birthday to our angel, Ashley Norma Fritz! Have a great birthday, may God bless you and we love you! Greetings come from your family, the Mungwaath family, Ivan and Richelle, and the whole Finasisu troops!

SAFE TRAVEL!

Bon voyage to a dear friend, Cheng Zingapan! Have a safe and nice vacation. I'm surely gonna miss you. Greetings come from your friend.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Expand work visas for top foreign talent

Each year, Washington awards visas to immigrants who bring skills and qualifications prized by high-tech companies. This is an eminently sensible policy, since highly trained immigrants add greatly to the nation's stock of human capital and as a group, they have a high propensity to start companies of their own. That creates more jobs for Americans.

There's one problem. The number of these special visas, called H1-Bs, is too low—only 65,000, with 20,000 more awarded each year to foreign students with master's degrees or higher from a U.S. university.

Those numbers don't begin to meet demand from tech firms hungry for new talent. In 2009, the annual quota was filled in less than a week. The year before, all the H1-Bs were snatched up in a single day.

This means that our world-class university system, supported to a great extent by tax dollars, is training thousands of smart foreign students, who then take those talents back home and start companies that compete with U.S. enterprises.

You can thank Congress for this because Congress caps the number of H1-Bs. But Kansas Sen. Jerry Moran, a Republican, and Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, a Democrat, have drafted a bill aimed at easing this bottleneck.

Their bill, called the Startup Act, would make it easier for new companies to raise financial capital by rolling back certain taxes, but its most significant provisions would greatly expand the number of visas available to foreign-born talent. It would authorize a new visa category for 50,000 foreign students who earn a master's degree or higher in a technical field—science, technology, engineering or math. A total of 75,000 additional visas would go to foreign-born entrepreneurs who register a new firm or raise $100,000 in capital while in the United States on another category of visa.

Moran says most of his colleagues probably agree that something needs to be done about the misguided bar on foreign-born talent. But sadly, immigration in general remains politically radioactive. The bill has only one other Senate co-sponsor: Missouri Republican Sen. Roy Blunt.

That's a shame. Immigration may be a divisive subject, but it is one of those topics in which the politics is lagging the facts on the ground.

Much of the concern about immigration, legal and illegal, is focused on Mexico. But our southern neighbor is changing rapidly.

It's growing much faster than the United States, creating opportunity for Mexicans who might otherwise be tempted to emigrate. Over the last four decades, its birth rate has plummeted from nearly 7 per woman to around 2. Arrests at the border have fallen off radically.

Some experts believe net immigration from Mexico has reached inconsequential levels, counting people who have returned to Mexico because of the sluggish U.S. economy.

That suggests immigration will someday fade as a hot-button dispute. For the present, however, it's still a touchy topic for any politician—which is why Moran and Warner deserve credit.

What's a mystery is why more of their colleagues aren't willing to sign onto a bill that will bring more technical and entrepreneurial talent to our country.

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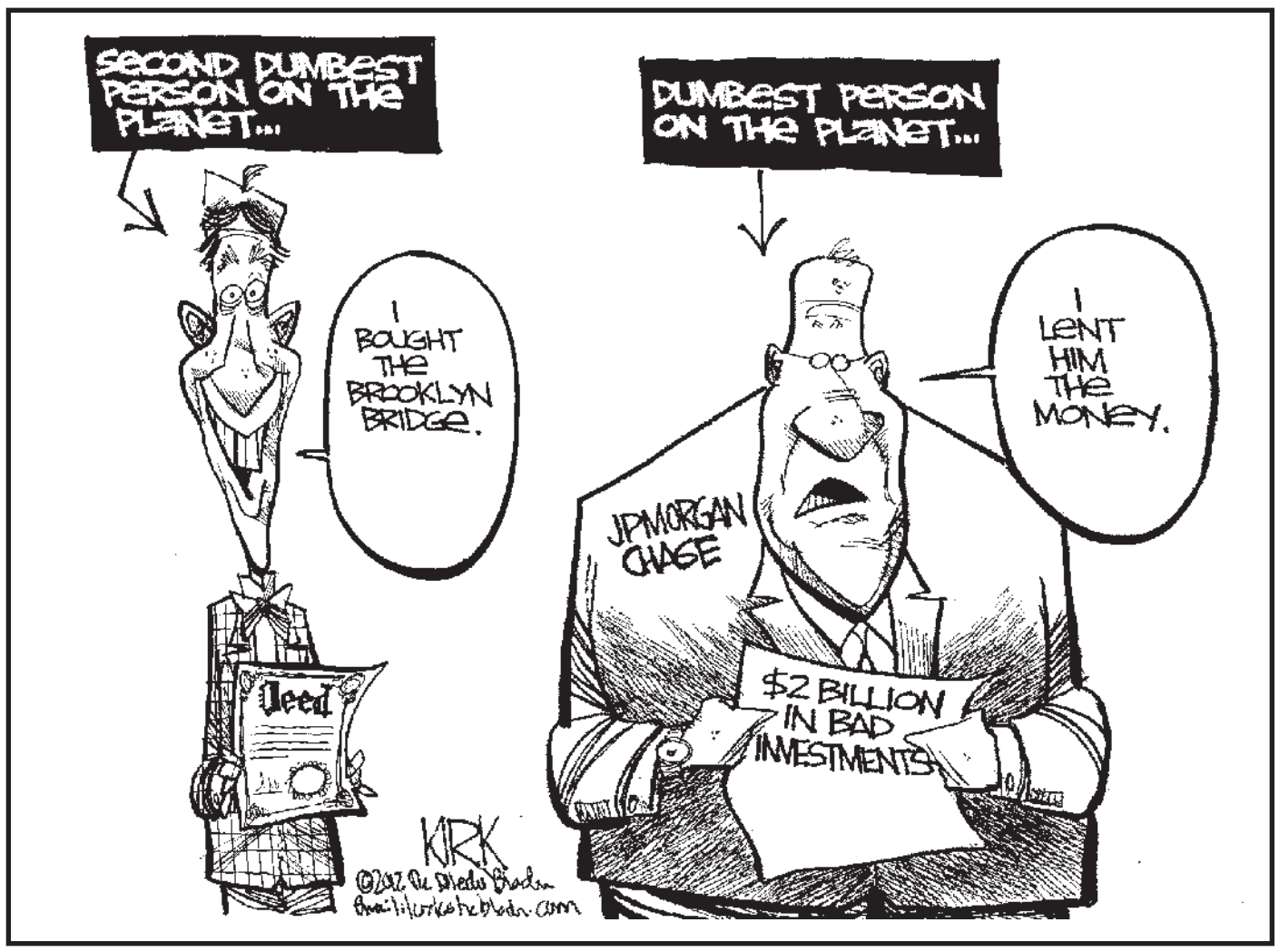


Air Saipan

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime R. Vergara (jrvergarajr2031@aol.com) previously taught at San Vicente Elementary School on Saipan and is currently a guest lecturer at Shenyang Aerospace University in China.

One of the contrasts between Shenyang and Saipan that was brought to my attention a year or so ago was from a traveler who visited the island for more than 30 days and bought herself a pair of white walking shoes while touring.

"The walking shoes stayed white in the duration of my stay," she said, "but after a day upon my return to Shenyang, the dust it swiftly accumulated was so much that I had to consign it quickly to the washing machine. Even then, I could not retrieve its original whiteness back."

She did not exaggerate. Shenyang's dependence on coal and its all pervasive emissions is evident all over, and the unabated construction boom is turning and swirling the Good Earth around, adding dust to the soot.

In all of my Oral English classes, as part of the students' assigned self-introductions, they are asked to speak of what they will do five years after university. Almost invariably, the urge to travel elsewhere, possibly to the southern island of Hainan, or to the mountaintops of Kunming, Sichuan, or Xizang, is universally planned with the common rationale of going to "where the air is clean and the sky is blue."

This struck me as very revealing after reading the report on Jerry Tan's presentation at the Rotary Club of the impending start of Saipan Air, initially between the CNMI and Japan, and later, to expand into China, and probably Korea.

To paraphrase the irreverence of political consultant James Carville's much-quoted Clinton presidential campaign slogan, "It is the air, stupid!"

We add as well, the land and the sea, too!

The natural resources of the islands of the Marianas remain its most attractive asset, even more than the diversity of its population and the display of the technological and cultural heritages of each.

Our decade-long sojourn on Saipan inured us to the still relatively pristine state of the islands' air, sea, land, and sky. To be sure, we decried the proliferation of algae in the lagoon, the failure of human zoning mindset in land development, the disregard of natural processes such as water tables and catchments in the service of the profitable turn, but we were never unappreciative of the bounty that resilient Mother Nature continues to endow the terrain, compared to other places where we lived before.

On the other hand, our experience was not unlike almost two decades before when I floated one lazy afternoon in the Marshall's Wotje lagoon in the early '80s with a snorkel and hardly a human creature in sight but in the company of a baby shark that was too small to be threatening. I was oblivious to the care of the world (I was there for the late Trans Atoll Service Corp. and personally visiting a Peace Corps volunteer's hut that was equipped with solar panels to power a small refrigerator full of beer—my responsibility—and ham radio) when a disposable baby diaper came into view.

There I was, imaginally and transport-wise, far from the reach of "civilization," yet the tentacles of commercialized plastic and chemical use popularized in my century already preceded my arrival.

Saipan Air as an airline venture provides the Commonwealth the opportunity to reflect on the state of its sea, land, and sky, for Saipan will have to operate as an end destination rather than as a transit one, Guam notwithstanding, if it were to flourish. In fact, that would be the only reason I could think of that Tan Holdings would be putting up the service, unless it is just an investment to be profitably sold off later to a larger corporation.

I will assume that Jerry is going with the former reason, given that "alliances" has become the airline industry's way of allowing small, medium and large service operations and geographical coverage in the industry.

We laud the vision for the airline. We are gladdened more for the opportunity to inventory the state of what is the Commonwealth's "selling point," the reason folks would temporarily venture into our neighborhood, the freshness of the air, the integrity of the marine life, and the clear sky. It is not too late to see ways of really conserving and managing our once pristine land and fresh water sources.

Actually, sustainably managing our natural resources is the easy task. It is the wily human factor that somehow remains more of a curse than a blessing. If the common processes of resource, production, and distribution define our economic existence, the issues of communal order, judicious and transparent equity, and relevant social services define our organizational needs. Our political structures are too clannishly archaic and confrontationally oligarchic to be of any use. Broader participation in decision-making is the order of the day!

Then, there is still the old notion that visitors are a necessary evil, to be tolerated while being exploited. That's a cultural issue, and at least, it can be dealt with without dependence on federal and/or foreign intervention.

Saipan Air. We shall be smart to keep it clean and fresh—the environment and the airline. Why, I might even become a travel agent! *Dong Bei* gets awfully cold in the winter (half of the year!) and China's industrial heartland has the *renminbi* to show for it. Bed-and-breakfast to five stars, here we come!

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Not enough doctors

By MONAE JOHNSON
THE BALTIMORE SUN

The Supreme Court's ruling on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, expected in June, will determine the future for countless Americans. Health care reform debates have elevated the plight of millions of uninsured Americans to the national consciousness. However, the physician workforce that would be needed to care for millions of newly insured people deserves equal attention.

There is a growing shortage of primary care physicians in the United States, and it has been forecast for decades. The American Association of Medical Colleges projects a shortage of 124,000 physicians by 2020, 37 percent of them primary care doctors. This growing shortage predates the coming squeeze due to the Affordable Care Act, whereby 16 million to 32 million newly insured will enter our health care system and another 45 million will vie for consistent primary-care access in underserved areas.

Some might ask how a shortage of this magnitude is possible in a country with such a wealth of medical schools, teaching hospitals, health systems and academic societies—along with so many faculty, medical students and resident physicians.

The answer lies in understanding the root cause of the shortage: Although the Council on Graduate Medical Education has kept pace with projections to increase medical school enrollment by 15 percent over the next ten years, there is a bottleneck in training doctors. Problem No. 1 is that for the last 15 years, the United States has capped the number of residency positions at 22,000 openings, with no funding for new residency slots.

The private market has cried out in unison, "We need more residency slots," and the federal government knew that this day would come. U.S. medical schools have enrolled thousands of international medical students and increased the number of women applicants by 3 percent; American Indian and Asian applicants are also up.

However, the total cost of medical student debt is too high and is not sufficiently subsidized by current government programs—that's problem No. 2. The Journal of the American Medical Association reported in 2008 that only 2 percent of fourth-year med students plan careers in general internal medicine, largely because of debt. The exorbitant cost and outrageous financing options deter many black and Hispanic students, in particular, from pursuing careers in general medicine. Ironically, minority primary-care physicians are most desperately needed in underserved areas.

Many minority students are first-generation would-be doctors not competitively prepared in public high school premed curricula, and therefore they need two years of post-baccalaureate training (with even more debt) after incurring four years of college debt just to make the cut to get into medical school. Yet, our current system sustains only 22,000 first-year residency slots for approximately 38,000 degreed physicians annually.

True, the Affordable Care Act does offer a 10 percent Medicare pay boost to entice residents into primary care training—but let's do the math. How could a new graduate pay off $400,000 in educational debt as a primary care physician with an annual salary of about $47,000 (the mean first-year residency stipend)? After loan repayment, this doctor has a possible $700 left per month. And frankly, 30-somethings with $400,000 of debt want to begin repayment just so they can aspire to the American dream of marriage, a family, buying a home and even affording decent clothes and meals.

In 2010, more than half of all graduating medical students in the U.S. had this type of debt. And if the Supreme Court upholds the Affordable Care Act, we will need these graduating medical students to buttress the influx of millions of newly insured into our national health care system.

If federal regulators adopted any of the following solutions, we would be in a much better situation:

- Encourage the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services to remove the current cap on residency slots nationwide, thereby funding more slots.
- Require all private insurers to contribute to residency training funding.
- Provide tuition remission for medical school students who attend one of the 78 public U.S. medical schools, with annual enrollment of 79,000 students.
- Allow all medical schools to create a primary care physician education track funding students for four years of tuition in exchange for primary care practice post-graduation.

During the Great Recession, our federal government spent more than $150 billion bailing out A.I.G. and $50 billion for General Motors. In recent years, our federal government spent $140 billion annually fighting wars overseas. The cost of not addressing this problem far exceeds the cost of solving it, and the medical education community understands this.

Monae Johnson is a doctoral candidate in public health at New York Medical College. Readers may send her email at monae—johnson@nymc.edu. She wrote this for the Baltimore Sun.

Living with a nuclear Iran

By CHARLES V. PENA
THE INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE

After months of heated rhetoric, the threat of a conflict with Iran over its nuclear program seems to be subsiding.

According to one Obama administration official, "We are in a period now where the combination of diplomacy and pressure is giving us a window." We'll all know better later this month when talks resume in Baghdad. Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi appears optimistic. "At the Baghdad meeting," he told reporters, "I see more progress."

So the good news is, at least in the short run, that there's hope of avoiding conflict.

But before we start celebrating we need to recognize that little has changed, including Iran's desire to become a nuclear power.

Like virtually everyone else, I don't think Iran should have nuclear weapons. But what I think is unimportant. It is important, however, to understand the Iranian regime's rationale for pursuing them—and why they're unlikely to abandon that pursuit, no matter what we offer in exchange.

In the view of Iran's ruling clerics, it is not irrational to see their country as the Muslim world's regional counterweight to U.S. ally Israel, which is presumed to have not only a nuclear capability, but as many as 100 nuclear warheads.

So what's the United States to do?

President Obama already has declared, "I do not have a policy of containment; I have a policy to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon." That means if diplomacy doesn't work—and it probably won't—the only option the president has left himself is military force.

While advocates of military force acknowledge that taking out Iran's nuclear program wouldn't be as "easy" as Israel's 1981 attack on Iraq's Osirak nuclear facility, which prevented Saddam Hussein from developing a nuclear warhead, they may underestimate the complexity of such an operation.

Iran's nuclear program doesn't consist of a single target, but perhaps as many as several hundred targets. Some of these are near heavily populated areas. And some buried deep underground in hardened bunkers.

The U.S. military is capable of conducting such an attack, but it would be a massive undertaking. And there would never be absolute, 100 percent certainty that all the targets were destroyed.

Iran, of course, wouldn't sit idly by during or after such an attack. While direct retaliation against the United States is beyond Iran's capability, attacking U.S. targets in Iraq and Afghanistan is not. Iran also could try to close or disrupt shipping traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, which carries some 20 percent of the world's oil. Or it might choose to attack Israel, perhaps triggering a wider regional conflict. Finally, Iran could resort to terrorism as a response—figuring it has little to lose.

But none of this really is necessary. While a nuclear-armed Iran would be no cause for celebration—and would complicate our national security strategy (and seriously complicate Israel's)—the fact is: The United States and its allies could live with a nuclear Iran.

After all, there are few nuttier regimes in the world than North Korea's—and a nuclear North Korea has not resulted in Armageddon.

The reality is that unless the mullahs in Tehran are suicidal—and they don't appear to be—Iran is no more likely to use a nuclear weapon than North Korea.

Why? Because the vastly superior and far-more capable U.S. nuclear arsenal would serve as a powerful deterrent, as would Israel's unacknowledged nuclear arsenal, which is backstopped with an increasingly sophisticated missile defense system. In short, the mullahs would risk total destruction if they launched a nuke.

The U.S. nuclear arsenal has successfully deterred the likes of Joseph Stalin and Mao Tse-Tung in the past – both of whom were considered "crazy" in their time. It has prevented North Korea's seemingly irrational leaders from doing the unthinkable. There's little reason to believe that Iran's blustery President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and the ruling mullahs, are any more anxious to see their country destroyed.

Of course, there would be risks involved with Iran eventually becoming a nuclear power. But those risks are more manageable than the risks associated with trying to destroy its nuclear program.

Charles V. Pena is a Washington-based senior fellow with the Independent Institute, and author of Winning the Un-War: A New Strategy for the War on Terrorism.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Road repair

I would like to request the Legislature's assistance for some minor road repairs in the lower dirt and gravel areas along Lalanghita and above Tank Beach and Marine Beach in the village of Kagman. I understand that Saipan is currently under economic hardships and that the people of Saipan are suffering from the effects of this on a daily basis. There doesn't seem to be much money for improvement of our island these days.

There is rumors among residents in the area that Laolao Bay Golf Resort is under some kind of obligation to maintain the roads of Kagman. Whether this is true or not, the residents deserve something better than the condition of their roads now. DPW or the Mayor's Office may be helpful in this project as well.

Lalanghita used to connect straight through from the paved section to the gravel section. I understand that because of severe erosion due to major storms, a section of this road became unusable and was closed to thru-traffic. Traffic was then detoured east, down Tank Beach Pl to the next block where traffic can find its way back again to Lalanghita for travel.

I am personally concerned that with the condition of these roads now, people have to swerve their cars all over the road and weave in and out of their appropriate lane of travel in order to avoid the worst of the deterioration and erosion. This causes safety concerns with other cars that may be traveling in the opposite direction. It also puts pedestrians at risk as there are many bus stop locations for our children on these roads. I am also concerned about the premature wear and damage that these roads are causing to not only personal vehicles, but to those who drive government vehicles as well, and this only increases the financial burden on residents and visitors of Kagman.

Finally I am concerned that as the traffic continues and the dust has been kicked up into the air, it has become evident that the rocks and gravel have been reduced into powder. Once the rainy season begins this powder will wash away and the erosion will be very bad. This will undoubtedly be a greater cost than maintenance now. I genuinely appreciate the role you all play in shaping our islands. Thank you for all you do on Capital Hill.

Jesse Randles
Kagman III

Secondary roads

To Saipan Mayor Donald Flores and the Department of Public Works: On Nov. 8, 2011, I filed a request for road repair at the Mayor's Office. The road, Nagao Place, is eroded often from the runoff of the college. I also asked my neighbor, Mr. Cesar Villaluz, to help follow up on this request. We did our job in following up the request but every time we call we are told that the machine for repair is being fixed. We regularly follow up this problem but it seems that there is no help in sight. I read the papers that our Washington delegate is talking about unspent CIP federal grants. I know that this fund will go back to the feds if we do not spend it. Are there chances of re-programming the money in order to spend it where it is needed? If this is a possibility, why is there no action? What are we waiting for?

One of our big problems in the CNMI is the development and maintenance of our secondary roads; not just repair but plan, pave, and fix them well so that they last. We, the residents do not have to ask for repair every time it rains. Right now, what we need at Nagao Place is repair—a real good repair work. Next, the CNMI should plan and build the secondary road (roads) to last, not just repair them after the rain. Is there a highway engineer on the island of Guam who can help? If we have to do the building of the roads well, we need the help of a competent engineer. Thank you.

Fe Calixterio
Nagao Place, Saipan

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°

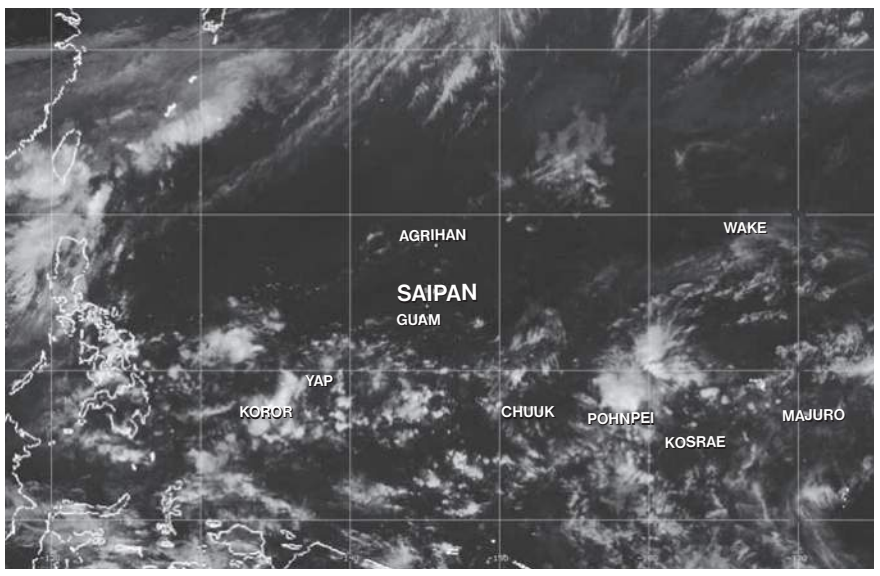
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thundershowers	▲89	▼80
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼76
Yap	Showers	▲91	▼78
Chuuk	Showers	▲87	▼78
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼76
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼76
Majuro	Showers	▲87	▼80

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲62	▼57
Beijing	Sunny	▲84	▼57
Hong Kong	Thundershowers	▲85	▼80
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲84	▼72
London	Mostly Cloudy	▲56	▼51
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲80	▼60
Manila	Thundershowers	▲93	▼82
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲64	▼48
Miami	Thundershowers	▲83	▼74
New York	Showers	▲78	▼54
Osaka	Showers	▲77	▼57
Paris	Showers	▲61	▼50
Pusan	Windy	▲71	▼56
Rome	Sunny	▲72	▼49
Salem	Mostly Sunny	▲73	▼43
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	▲63	▼51
Seoul	Showers	▲73	▼53
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	▲77	▼63
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	▲84	▼59

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2012

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A stationary front stretches southwestward from 25N163E to end near 23N151E. Cloudiness and scattered showers are located well northeast of the Marianas over Minami Tori Shima north of a line from 25N152E to 21N155E to 25N158E. Trade-wind convergence is triggering scattered showers and a few thunderstorms northwest of Koror west of a line from 14N136E to 10N134E to 8N130E. A near-equatorial trough runs southeastward from 4N130E through a circulation centered southeast of Koror at 2N140E to end at EQ144E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found over the Republic of Palau and Yap state within 150 miles of a line from 2N132E to 9N138E to 7N144E and farther east near Chuuk within 125 miles of a line from 9N150E to 11N153E. A trade-wind disturbance is generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms near Pohnpei within 170 miles of a line from 11N159E to 2N159E. Another trade-wind disturbance is producing scattered showers northeast of Majuro east of a line from 13N180 to 11N173E to 8N173E to 7N180E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

5:49 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
12:56 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
7:23 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	5:48 AM	6:39 PM
Friday	5:48 AM	6:39 PM
Saturday	5:47 AM	6:40 PM
Sunday	5:47 AM	6:40 PM
Monday	5:47 AM	6:40 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	2:58 AM	3:39 PM
Friday	3:36 AM	4:27 PM
Saturday	4:16 AM	5:15 PM
Sunday	4:58 AM	6:05 PM
Monday	5:43 AM	6:55 PM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 6, 2012

DEPARTURES

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA5062	2:40am	3:10am	1, 5

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN)

UA5062	3:40am	4:15am	1, 5

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA5062	4:50am	5:40am	1, 5
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA5074	11:30pm	12:20pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5076	3:10pm	4:00pm	Daily
UA5078	6:50pm	7:40pm	Daily
UA5072	9:55pm	10:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	6:05am	8:50am	Daily
DL297	4:35pm	7:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ606	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:50am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ604	3:30pm	6:55pm	Daily

SAIPAN-GUANZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ606/701	2:20am	11:05am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:50am	11:05am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/191	4:35am	9:55am	3, 6 via GUM
DL287/173	6:05am	10:15pm	Daily via NRT
UA5076/183	3:10pm	8:45pm	Daily via GUM
UA5076/193	3:10pm	10:25pm	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
OZ604/703	3:30pm	10:45pm	Daily via ICN
UA5072/PR111	9:55pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM
UA5072/PR111	10:05pm	7:50am+1	3, 6 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ606/721	2:20am	11:50pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:50am	11:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5076/147	4:35pm	9:45pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/723	3:30pm	10:40pm	Daily via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA5062	3:40am	5:40am	1, 5

SAIPAN (SPN)-ROTA (ROP)

UA5064	4:15am	4:50am	1, 5

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA5062	2:40am	4:15am	1, 5 via ROP
UA5071	7:10am	8:00am	Daily
UA5073	10:05am	10:55am	Daily
UA5075	1:45pm	2:35pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5077	5:25pm	6:15pm	Daily
UA5079	8:35pm	9:25pm	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL288	8:15pm	12:50am+1	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ603	8:50am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ605	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ605	8:15pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

GUANZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
DL172/288	8:05am	12:50am+1	Daily via NRT
UA190/5077	10:55am	6:15pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA190/5077	10:55am	9:25pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	12:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	12:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C05071	10:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM
UA192/5071	9:45pm	8:00am+1	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
UA184/5071	10:55pm	8:00am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5071	11:25pm	8:00am+1	2, 5 via GUM
OZ704/603	11:45pm	2:20pm+1	Daily via ICN

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ724/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ722/605	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ722/605	1:10pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
UA180/5076	10:35pm	8:00am+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; CZ: China Southern; UA: United; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam–Rota			
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily
Rota–Saipan			
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily
Guam–Rota			
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily
Rota–Saipan	17:50	18:20	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily
Rota–Guam	10:20	10:45	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily
Rota–Guam			
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily
Saipan–Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Tinian–Saipan			
FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

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- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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Business

Lack of trust in Facebook may hold back ad sales

NEW YORK (AP)—Facebook's reach is wide but not deep. Few users surveyed in an Associated Press-CNBC poll say they click on the site's ads or buy the virtual goods that make money for it.

More than 40 percent of American adults log in to the site—to share news, personal observations, photos and more—at least once a week. In all, some 900 million people around the world are users. But many of them don't have a very high opinion of Facebook or trust it to keep their information private.

If Facebook the company were a Facebook user, it would have a lot of virtual friends but not many real ones, the poll suggested.

Users' distrust limits the value of the site's ads. Advertisers want to target their messages to the people most likely to respond to them. And the more Facebook knows about us, the better it will be at tailoring those ads to our interests.

Yet in the poll of U.S. adults published Tuesday, only 13 percent said they trust Facebook "completely" or "a lot" when it comes to keeping their personal information private. A majority, or 59 percent, said they trust Facebook "only a little," or "not at all."

Users' desire for privacy and Facebook's need to target advertising aren't necessarily opposing interests. Facebook doesn't expose information about its users directly to advertisers. Instead, it effectively accepts missions to deliver ads to groups of people, like "moviegoers" or "people planning trips to Europe." It's up to Facebook to figure out how to find those people.

But the company doesn't seem to be connecting very well. In the poll, 83 percent of respondents said they "hardly ever" or "never" click on the ads Facebook serves up.

The ones who did click through were enough to yield the company $4.34 per user in advertising last year. That's up from $3.07 in 2009. So the company is getting better at making money from its user base, but it has a long way to go to fill out the market capitalization of nearly $100 billion implied in its IPO pricing.

Google, another online advertising company that walks a similar line between ad targeting and privacy, makes more than $30 per user, per year. People also like it more. In the AP-CNBC poll, 71 percent of respondents had a favorable opinion of Google, compared to 51 percent for Facebook.

"Somehow Facebook still hasn't stumbled upon a model that's proven consistently successful for marketers, or that brings in the massive revenues to match the site's massive user base," Forrester Research analyst Nate Elliott said in a blog post.

The Wall Street Journal reported Tuesday that General Motors Co. plans to stop advertising on Facebook because the company has concluded that the ads are ineffective. The paper cited anonymous sources.

GM spokesman Greg Martin confirmed that the company doesn't plan to continue ads on Facebook, but said it will keep paid content on company pages that promote its products. He would not say why, but the company said it reassesses ads continually to measure how effective they are.

Debra Aho Williamson, an analyst at research firm eMarketer, said Facebook has plenty of opportunities to be a better link between advertisers and users. For instance, it can be more effective when it places an ad in a social context. People are much more likely to click on an ad if a friend has already "liked" it or if it consists of a comment a friend posted on the brand website, she said.

"This all fairly new and experimental. I don't think we've seen the full results of what adding social context means when it comes to the response to advertising," she said.

Advertising made up 82 percent of Facebook's revenue in the latest quarter. The rest came from the purchase of Facebook "credits" for the purchase of virtual goods, like cows in "Farmville" or chips in "Zynga Poker." But like advertising, this is a business that touches only a minority of Facebook users. Last year, 15 million users, or only 2 percent of the total, bought any credits at all.

AP

Flowers were added to a Facebook sign in front of Facebook headquarters in Menlo Park, Calif., Sunday, May 13, 2012.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Oil falls to 6-month low below $93 on US supplies

SINGAPORE (AP)—Oil prices fell to fresh six-month lows below $93 a barrel Wednesday in Asia after a report showed U.S. crude supplies surged more than expected last week. Benchmark oil for June delivery was down $1.22 to $92.76 a barrel, the lowest since November, at midday Singapore time in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract fell 80 cents to settle at $93.98 in New York on Tuesday. Brent crude for July delivery was down $1.14 at $110.31 per barrel in London. The American Petroleum Institute said late Tuesday that crude inventories rose 6.6 million barrels last week while analysts surveyed by Platts, the energy information arm of McGraw-Hill Cos., had predicted an increase of 1.5 million barrels.

Dow Jones average continues a two-week slide

Europe's latest political impasse cast a gloom over financial markets Tuesday. The euro plunged, and the Dow Jones industrial average extended a slide that has wiped out nearly 5 percent of its value in two weeks. The biggest action of the day came shortly before U.S. markets opened, when a Greek party leader announced the talks to build a coalition government had failed. The euro and major European stock markets turned sharply lower and stayed there the rest of the day. In the U.S., stocks opened mixed and then staged a weak, mid-morning rally after word that confidence among U.S. builders rose to a five-year high in May.

Pace of new credit card accounts picked up in 1Q

LOS ANGELES (AP)—U.S. credit card users are getting better about making more timely payments, even as banks are increasingly issuing cards to borrowers with less-than-stellar credit. The rate of payments at least 90 days overdue dipped in the first three months of the year to 0.73 percent, credit reporting agency TransUnion said Thursday. That's down from 0.78 percent in the fourth quarter of 2011 and 0.74 percent in the first quarter of last year. While the rate increased in the second half of last year, the broader trend has seen delinquency rates decline steadily since the last recession started toward the end of 2007, said Charlie Wise, TransUnion's director of research and consulting.

Asia stocks fall amid political turmoil in Greece

BANGKOK (AP)—Asian stocks dived Wednesday after a failure by Greece's political leaders to form a coalition government set the stage for new elections next month, keeping Europe's debt crisis center stage. Japan's Nikkei 225 index dropped 1.5 percent to 8,771.60 amid discouraging economic news. Core private-sector machinery orders fell 2.8 percent in March, the first drop in three months, Japan's Cabinet Office said. Elsewhere, investors remained focused on the turmoil in Greece. Hong Kong's Hang Seng slid 2.8 percent to 19,346.54 and South Korea's Kospi fell 2.3 percent to 1,855.13. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 lost 2.3 percent to 4,167.50 amid sliding commodities prices.

Americans spending a bit more as gas prices fall

By CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER and MARTIN CRUTSINGER
AP ECONOMICS WRITERS

WASHINGTON (AP)—Americans are starting to see some relief from higher gas prices, a change that could revive the economy in the months ahead.

Consumer prices were flat in April, largely because of a decline in gas prices. Lower prices at the pump may be combining with steady job growth to power more spending on big purchases.

Sales of autos, furniture and electronics all rose in April. And Americans spent more at restaurants and bars—generally a sign of confidence in the economy.

"Consumer spending looks to have started the second quarter on a solid footing," said Paul Ashworth, an economist at Capital Economics.

Despite the strength in key areas, overall retail sales increased just 0.1 percent last month, the Commerce Department said Tuesday. That modest gain followed two stronger months in February and March.

Cheaper gas offset some of the gains in big purchases. The mild winter was also a factor. In the previous two months, it boosted sales in areas such as building materials and gardening supplies. Spending in those categories fell sharply in April.

Still, economists were encouraged by the details in the report. Excluding autos, gas station sales and spending on building materials, so-called core retail sales increased 0.4 percent, a modest gain.

"All the categories that showed gains are positive signs for consumer spending going forward," said Leslie Levesque, senior economist at IHS Global Insight. "The categories where there were declines were mainly a payback for the warmer weather."

The positive signs come six months before voters will decide whether to give President Barack Obama a second term in an election focused heavily on the economy. Obama is trying to convince voters that the economy is on an upswing. His Republican rival, Mitt Romney, counters that the unemployment rate is a still-high 8.1 percent and argues that Obama's policies are weakening the recovery.

Recent job growth has contributed to higher consumer confidence. Employers have added 1 million jobs in the past five months, though the pace of gains has slowed recently.

Another reason to be optimistic: gas prices are falling after spiking earlier this year. The national average dropped to $3.73 per gallon on Tuesday, about 17 cents cheaper than a month ago, according to a survey by AAA. Sales at gas stations fell 0.3 percent in April.

"We had expected gas prices to be elevated until Memorial Day," Levesque said. "The fact that they have already retreated so much is a very good sign. It alleviates the strain on consumers' pockets."

STOCK PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW	S&P	NASDAQ
12,632.00	1,330.66	2,893.76
-63.35	-7.69	-8.82
-0.50%	-0.57%	-0.30%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	1.0093	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7688	Philippine Peso	42.94
British Pound	0.6264	Indian Rupee	54.135	Singapore Dollar	1.2674
Canadian Dollar	1.0106	Indonesian Rupiah	9380	South Korean Won	1165.55
Chinese Yuan	6.3219	Japanese Yen	80.3815	Swiss Franc	0.9442
Euro	0.7866	Malaysian Ringgit	3.1135	Taiwan Dollar	29.595
		New Zealand Dollar	1.3041	Thailand Baht	31.49

Nation

ACROSS THE NATION

Obama assets valued between $2.6M and $8.3M

WASHINGTON (AP) -- President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama hold assets worth between nearly $2.6 million and nearly $8.3 million, according to financial disclosure reports released Tuesday by the White House. The documents show the couple's assets for last year. The first family's assets were valued between $1.8 million and nearly $12 million in 2010. Obama released the annual report in the middle of a presidential campaign that has brought attention to the wealth of his Republican opponent, Mitt Romney. The former Massachusetts governor is worth $190 million to $250 million, with much of his money coming from investments.

Defense mum on whether John Edwards will testify

GREENSBORO, N.C. (AP)—Attorneys for John Edwards on Tuesday indicated that their defense in his criminal trial for alleged campaign finance violations is winding down, but they did not say whether the former presidential candidate or his one-time mistress will take the witness stand. Defense lawyer Abbe Lowell said his team will make a final decision about their remaining witnesses late Tuesday, but it was not immediately clear if that information will be made public before Edwards' trial resumes Wednesday morning. After Tuesday's proceedings wrapped up, Lowell said the defense could close out its case by calling Edwards, his oldest daughter Cate and Rielle Hunter, the woman with whom he had an extramarital affair while running for president in 2008.

Records detail George Zimmerman's medical injuries

MIAMI (AP)—Court records show George Zimmerman had a pair of black eyes, a nose fracture and two cuts to the back of his head after the fatal shooting of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. ABC News reports the medical records were part of evidence released Tuesday that prosecutors have in the second-degree murder case against Zimmerman. He has entered a plea of not guilty and claims self-defense in the Feb. 26 shooting. A message left Tuesday evening with Zimmerman's attorney was not immediately returned. Zimmerman was treated Feb. 27 at Altamonte Family Practice. Some of the injuries were previously reported by The Associated Press based on video of Zimmerman at a jail sally port.

Scientists hunt ways to stall Alzheimer's earlier

WASHINGTON (AP)—Look for a fundamental shift in how scientists hunt ways to ward off the devastation of Alzheimer's disease—by testing possible therapies in people who don't yet show many symptoms, before too much of the brain is destroyed.

The most ambitious attempt: An international study announced Tuesday will track whether an experimental drug can stall the disease in people who appear healthy but are genetically destined to get a type of Alzheimer's that runs in the family. If so, it would be exciting evidence that maybe regular Alzheimer's is preventable too.

A second study will test whether a nasal spray that sends insulin to the brain helps people with very early memory problems, based on separate research linking diabetes to an increased risk of Alzheimer's.

The new focus emerges as the Obama administration adopts the first national strategy to fight the worsening Alzheimer's epidemic—a plan that sets the clock ticking toward finally having effective treatments by 2025.

"We are at an exceptional moment," with more important discoveries about Alzheimer's in the last few months than in recent years, Dr. Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health, declared Tuesday.

But a meeting of the world's top Alzheimer's scientists this week made clear that meeting the 2025 deadline will require developing a mix of treatments to attack the different ways that Alzheimer's damages the brain—much like it can take a cocktail of drugs to treat high blood pressure or the AIDS virus.

Perhaps more importantly, it will require testing possible drugs before full-blown Alzheimer's sets in, when it may be too late to do much good. After all, Alzheimer's starts ravaging the brain at least a decade before memory problems appear. And doctors don't wait until the worst symptoms appear before treating heart disease, cancer or diabetes, noted Dr. Reisa Sperling of Harvard Medical School.

"Once the train leaves the station of degeneration, it might be too late to stop it," Sperling said. "We need to define the critical window for intervention."

Future therapy is far from the only goal of the first National Alzheimer's Plan. It's a two-pronged approach, promising to provide better and support for overwhelmed families along the way.

alzheimers.gov
For the people helping people with Alzheimer's
Alzheimer's is...
Treatment Options
How to Pay & Plan
Caring for Someone
Help with Alzheimer's
Fighting Alzheimer's
I Am Not Alone
Answers Start Here
What is Alzheimer's disease?
How do you know if someone has it?
What are the treatment options?
How do I plan ahead? What does insurance pay for? What does Medicare pay for?
What kind of care does someone with Alzheimer's disease need?
Where can I go for help?
What other efforts are underway in fighting Alzheimer's disease?
Find out more

AP

This image from the Health and Human Services new website alzheimers.gov shows the home page.

"A lot more needs to be done and it needs to be done right now, because people with Alzheimer's disease and their loved ones and caregivers need help right now," Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said in announcing the plan.

Among the first steps: A new website—http://www.alzheimers.gov—that Sebelius called a one-stop shop for families offers easy-to-understand information about dementia and links to resources in their own communities. The government will offer free training to doctors and other health providers on how to spot the early signs of Alzheimer's and care for those patients. This summer, a campaign will begin to improve public awareness of Alzheimer's, important in reducing the stigma that helps fuel late diagnosis and the isolation that so many affected families feel.

Patient advocates applauded the move, and country music legend Glen Campbell, who has Alzheimer's, appeared on Capitol Hill to urge more research.

Alzheimer's "has been in the shadows for far too long," said Eric J. Hall of the Alzheimer's Foundation of America. The plan "provides solid stepping stones toward substantial change."

Already, 5.4 million Americans have Alzheimer's or related dementias. Barring a research breakthrough, those numbers will jump by 2050, when up to 16 million Americans are projected to have Alzheimer's.

Army opens jobs in combat battalions to women

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. (AP)—Female soldiers this week are moving into new jobs in once all-male units as the Army breaks down formal barriers in recognition of what has already happened in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The policy change announced earlier this year is being tested at nine brigades, including one at Fort Campbell, before going Army-wide. It opens thousands of jobs to female soldiers by loosening restrictions meant to keep them away from the battlefield. Experience on the ground in the past decade showed women were fighting and dying alongside male soldiers anyway.

Col. Val Keaveny Jr., commander of the 4th Brigade Combat Team that is among units piloting the change, told The Associated Press that for the last decade it has been common to have women temporarily attached to the combat units and serve alongside them.

MCT

In this file photo, Blanca Hernandez, from left, Brandy Kaufman and Sophina Burnside eat their MREs outside the tent they share with eight other female soldiers in Camp Grizzly in Kuwait on Feb. 17, 2003.

"Women have served in our Army since the Revolutionary War and they have done phenomenal work and continue to do so today," he said. "There is great talent and now we can have it in the headquarters of infantry, armor and cavalry."

Under the new policy, female officers and non-commissioned officers will be assigned to combat units below the brigade level. The change will open up about 14,000 new jobs for women in the military, but there are still more than 250,000 jobs that remain closed to women.

The new jobs within combat battalions are in personnel, intelligence, logistics, signal corps, medical and chaplaincy. The Army is also opening jobs that were once entirely closed to women, such as mechanics for tanks and artillery and rocket launcher crew members.

The 4th Brigade draws its lineage from the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, whose World War II heroics led to books and a TV miniseries called the "Band of Brothers." But these days, Keaveny said there are more than 350 women already serving in the brigade and they will be opening 36 new jobs to women in the battalions.

"For the last 10 years, we have been fighting alongside women. In my experience I have seen that the Band of Brothers quickly integrate their sisters and they are a family," he said.

Capt. Elizabeth Evans, a 44-year-old mother of five, is one of the first women assigned to the combat battalions. She will be serving as a battalion S1, whose job is to oversee personnel issues within the battalion, including awards, casualties, human resources and other administrative responsibilities. She said there is a lot of pride associated with serving in an infantry unit.

"I think there's a rich history in the 101st and especially the 4th Brigade Combat Team," she said.

Deputies: Fla. mom killed 4 kids, then herself

PORT ST. JOHN, Fla. (AP)—A Florida mother who fatally shot her four children before killing herself Tuesday called three of the kids who had sought help from a neighbor back to the house before firing the fatal shots, authorities said.

Tonya Thomas, 33, fatally shot her four children, who ranged in age from 12 to 17, said Lt. Tod Goodyear, a spokesman for the Brevard County Sheriff's Office.

Three of the children had gone to a neighbor's front door before dawn to say their mother had shot them. The mother then called the children back to the house and killed them, Goodyear said.

"From what the neighbors said, she was very calm. She walked out and called them back. They turned around and walked back to the house," Goodyear said.

The neighbor then heard gunshots and called 911.

Another neighbor told deputies that Thomas sent a text message in the middle of the night saying she wanted to be cremated with her children.

"He didn't see the text until he woke up this morning," Goodyear said.

Deputies identified the children as Pebbles Johnson, 17; Jaxs Johnson, 15; Jazzlyn Johnson, 13; and Joel Johnson, 12.

The shooting happened in Port St. John, about 15 miles west of Cape Canaveral in an area known as the "Space Coast" because it is the home of NASA's Kennedy Space Center, the location of numerous famed shuttle launches.

A spokesman for the Department of Children and Families wouldn't immediately comment on whether the family had a history with the agency.

Asia

‘Black box’ found of Russia jet in Indonesia crash

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Indonesian special forces have found the voice-and-data recorder of a new Russian passenger jet that slammed into a jagged, mist-shrouded cliff on a dormant volcano, an official said Wednesday.

The “black box” could help explain the cause of the deadly crash of the Sukhoi Superjet 100, which had been on a short demonstration flight for potential buyers. Search and Rescue agency spokesman Gagah Prakoso said it was found near the tail of the shattered wreck at the bottom of a 1,500-foot (500-meter) ravine.

The device was delivered to investigators late Tuesday. It was badly burned and lost its orange color, making it harder for search teams to find it among the trees and heavy brush, Prakoso said.

The Sukhoi Superjet 100—Russia’s first passenger jet model since the fall of the Soviet Union two decades ago—was being demonstrated for potential buyers when it roared into Mount Salak at 800 kph (480 mph) on May 9. All 45 people on board were killed.

Tatang Kurniadi, who heads the National Commission on Safety Commission, said he and his Russian colleagues would make a joint official announcement about the black box later Wednesday.

He added that data retrieved from the device would be analyzed in Indonesia, with assistance from Russian experts.

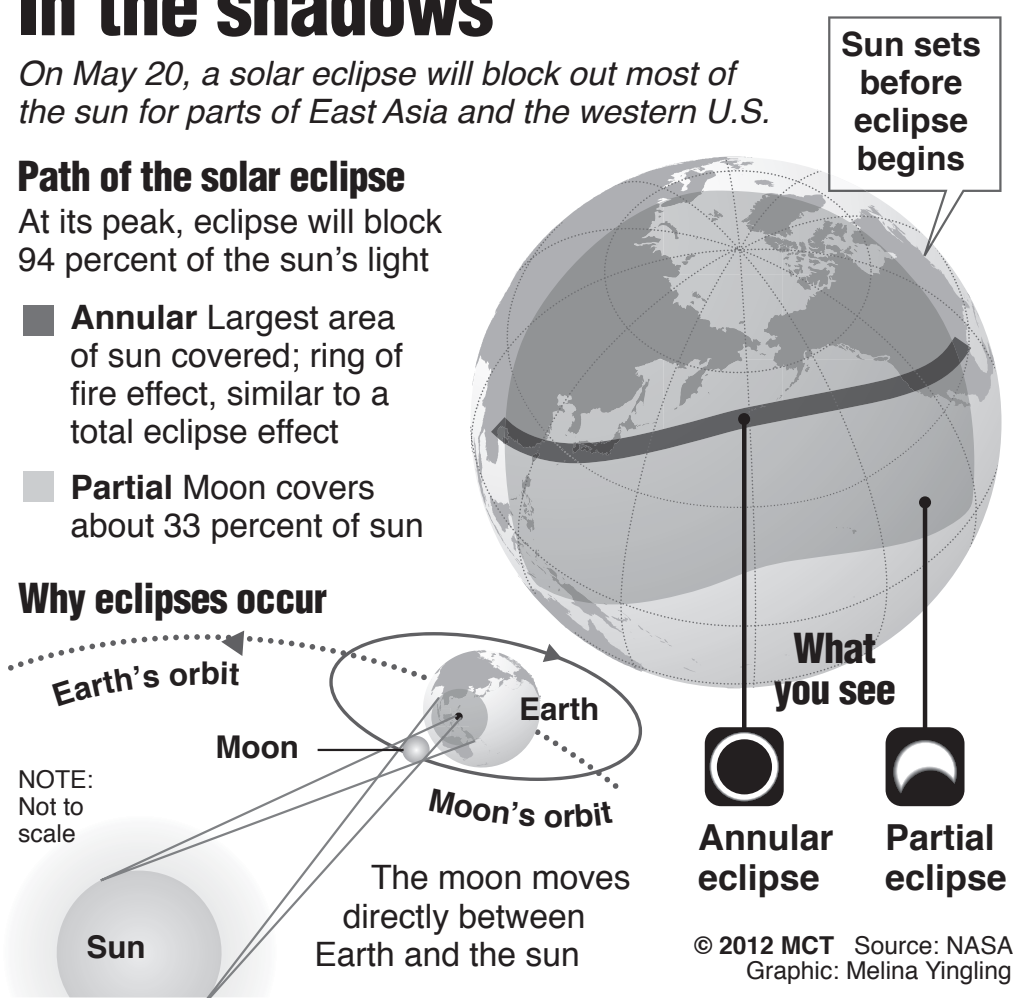
The Superjet is Russia’s first new model of passenger jet since the fall of the Soviet Union two decades ago, and is intended to help resurrect its aerospace industry. The plane was being demonstrated for representatives of Indonesia’s fast-expanding domestic airlines, which are among its biggest potential buyers.

AP

Rescuers prepare a body bag containing the remains of a victim of the crash of Sukhoi Superjet-100 on the peak of Mount Salak, West Java, Indonesia, Tuesday, May 15, 2012.

In the shadows

On May 20, a solar eclipse will block out most of the sun for parts of East Asia and the western U.S.


Path of the solar eclipse
At its peak, eclipse will block 94 percent of the sun’s light
Annular Largest area of sun covered; ring of fire effect, similar to a total eclipse effect
Partial Moon covers about 33 percent of sun
Sun sets before eclipse begins
What you see
Annular eclipse
Partial eclipse
Why eclipses occur
Earth’s orbit
Earth
Moon
Moon’s orbit
NOTE: Not to scale
Sun
The moon moves directly between Earth and the sun
© 2012 MCT Source: NASA
Graphic: Melina Yingling

China slams Britain after Cameron meets Dalai Lama

BEIJING (AP)—China criticized British Prime Minister David Cameron on Tuesday for meeting with the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, saying it amounts to support for Tibet’s independence from Chinese rule.

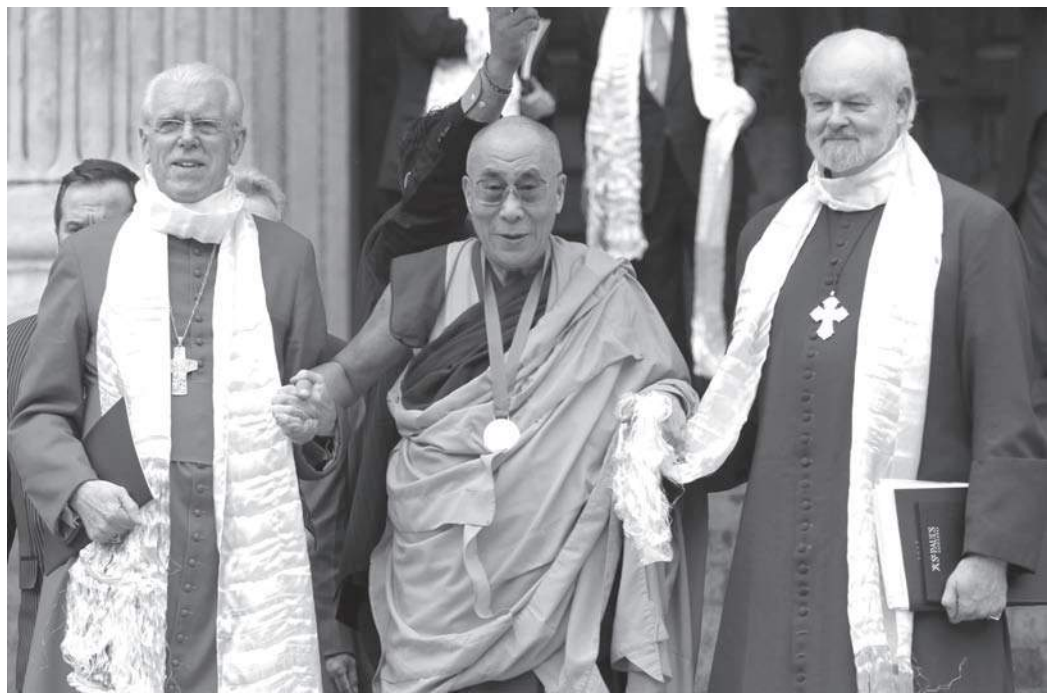
The British government ignored Beijing’s objections in going ahead with Monday’s meeting in London, and doing so “hurts the feelings of the Chinese people,” meddles in China’s affairs and harms Chinese-British relations, Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said. He said Britain now needs to take actions to repair the damage.

“We are strongly discontented and firmly opposed to it,” Hong told reporters at a daily briefing. “We call on the British side to earnestly respond to China’s solemn demand, stop conniving at and supporting separatist attempts to achieve Tibetan independence, take practical measures to eliminate the terrible impact and take actions to preserve Chinese-British relations.”

Hong said his ministry lodged a protest with the British Embassy in Beijing and the Chinese Embassy in London delivered the same message to the British government.

Beijing has campaigned for decades to counteract the international influence of the Dalai Lama, whose world travels draw attention to the Communist government’s often-harsh 60-year rule over Tibet.

Beijing has fiercely lobbied foreign leaders to shun the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and threatened the loss of Chinese business to get its way.



AP

The Dalai Lama, Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader, center, with Bishop of London Richard Chartres, right, and St. Paul’s Cathedral Canon Pastor Reverend Michael Colclough as he leaves St. Paul’s Cathedral in London after receiving the 2012 Templeton Prize awarded to him for encouraging scientific research and harmony among religions, Monday, May 14, 2012.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Filipino militants free kidnapped Malaysian

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine officials say a Malaysian man has been freed by suspected Abu Sayyaf militants after a year of jungle captivity in the country’s south. Sulu provincial Gov. Abdusakur Tan said Wednesday that Mohammad Nazarudin bin Saidin was released by suspected Abu Sayyaf militants in his province on Friday. It was not immediately clear if any ransom was paid for the victim, a truck driver. Police say the victim was seized by the gunmen while buying geckos in Sulu’s Indanan township in May last year. Officials say the kidnappers demanded an unspecified ransom but that the victim’s family could not afford the amount, prolonging his detention. Washington has blacklisted the Abu Sayyaf as a terrorist organization.

Vietnam protests China’s S. China Sea fishing ban

HANOI, Vietnam (AP)—Vietnam is protesting China’s fishing ban in parts of the South China Sea that Hanoi claims as its own. Foreign Ministry spokesman Luong Thanh Nghi says in a statement posted on the ministry’s website late Tuesday that Vietnam considers China’s decision “invalid.” China’s seasonal ban begins Wednesday and is meant to curb overfishing in the South China Sea. But parts of the sea also are claimed by Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan. The sea has valuable fishing grounds and shipping lanes, and is believed to be rich in oil and gas. Vietnam and China have recently engaged in spats in disputed waters, and a marine standoff between the Philippines and China over an uninhabited shoal has gone on for more than a month.

Ex-Soviet Uzbekistan plans privatization drive

ALMATY, Kazakhstan (AP)—Uzbekistan’s government plans to sell off almost 500 state assets over the next two years in an ongoing drive to expand the private sector in this former Soviet nation. Media in Uzbekistan cited Uzbek state property committee deputy chairman Saifitdlin Gafarov as saying Tuesday that assets in the oil, gas, energy, metals, agriculture, electronics and pharmaceuticals industries sectors will be made available for purchase. Privately owned news portal UzReport.com cited government officials as saying one aim was to attract foreign investors to help boost Uzbekistan’s technological capacity. The Central Asian nation north of Afghanistan has pursued a strict policy of economic self-reliance since gaining independence in 1991 but has recently shown openness to international financial support.

World

UN observers caught up in Syrian violence

BEIRUT (AP)—The U.N.'s observer mission in Syria was caught up in a burst of violence Tuesday captured on video, with a roadside bomb damaging its cars just minutes after witnesses said regime forces gunned down mourners at a funeral procession nearby.

The mission confirmed its vehicles were hit by a bomb shortly after they met with Syrian rebels, and said there were no injuries.

It was not clear how close the observers were to the funeral shootings, but if confirmed, a regime attack on a civilians directly in front of the observer mission could put pressure on them to describe publicly what they are seeing in Syria. They report back to the U.N. but have not publicized their findings.

The attack in the northern town of Khan Sheikhoun is at least the second time that U.N. observers have been caught up in Syria's violence. Last week, a roadside bomb struck a Syrian military truck in the south of the country just seconds after the head of the U.N. observers team drove by in a convoy.

A video of the bomb attack was posted by activists online. "The front of a U.N. car took a direct hit," activist Fadi al-Yassin, who witnessed the incident, told The Associated Press. "Everyone ran in panic but the observers stayed in the car. People tried to talk to them but they wouldn't even open their windows."

Just minutes earlier, Syrian forces fired on a funeral procession, activists said. Al-Yassin and the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said that as many as 20 people may have been killed and said many others were wounded, some of them in serious condition. It was impossible to independently confirm the toll.

"This is a real massacre and it took place in the presence of U.N. observers," Rami Abdul-Rahman, head of the Observatory, said of the attack on the funeral. He called for an international investigation and for the monitors to state publicly what they saw.

A video posted by activists online appeared to show the exact moment the U.N. vehicle was struck. The video shows two white vehicles clearly marked "U.N" with people milling around it, and two others parked a few meters behind. Slippers apparently left behind by the mourners running away from the shooting earlier are seen strewn about on the ground.

AP

In this Monday, May 14, 2012 photo, Syrian rebels aim their machine guns at Khaldiyeh neighborhood in Homs province, central Syria.

US helps Yemen in offensive on al-Qaida in south

AP

In this Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2010 file photo, an anti-terrorist unit from the Central Security Forces of the Ministry of Interior trains in the Sarif area on the eastern outskirts of the capital Sana, in Yemen.

SANAA, Yemen (AP)—Yemeni warplanes and troops backed by heavy artillery waged a four-front assault Tuesday against the strongholds of al-Qaida militants in the south, with U.S. troops for the first time helping direct the offensive from a nearby desert air base-turned-command center.

Yemeni military officials said dozens of U.S. troops were operating from al-Annad air base, about 65 kilometers (45 miles) from the main battle zones, coordinating assaults and airstrikes and providing information to Yemeni forces.

The officials said it was the most direct American involvement yet in the country's expanding campaign against al-Qaida's branch in Yemen, which has been blamed for directing a string of unsuccessful bomb plots on U.S. soil from its hideouts in the impoverished country at the tip of the Arabian Peninsula.

Most recently, this month it emerged that the CIA thwarted a plot to down a U.S.-bound airliner using a new, sophisticated explosive to be hidden in the bomber's underwear. But the planned bomber was actually a double agent who turned the device over to the U.S. government.

The offensive is the most concerted yet aiming to uproot al-Qaida militants who since last year have held a swath of territory, including the provincial capital Zinjibar and several other towns, in the south of the country. One Yemeni military official said the country's defense minister and an American general, whom he did not identify, were jointly overseeing the assault.

The Yemeni military officials, who are familiar with the workings of the army in the south, spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the highly sensitive cooperation. The U.S. Embassy in Sanaa could not be reached for comment.

In a crescent-shaped assault on Zinjibar, Yemeni troops pushed into the center of the city, though they did not outright control it, one official said. Military helicopters flew over the city for the first time in an indication militants had lost their heavy weaponry capable of shooting down the helicopters, the official said.

The troops "can for the first time catch a glimpse of the torched government buildings" that al-Qaida's fighters had hunkered down in during recent battles, the official said.

Al-Qaida militants seized Zinjibar, the capital of Abyan province on the Arabian Sea coast, last year while the country was mired in the political turmoil of the popular uprising against then-President Ali Abdullah Saleh. The militants also took control of several other nearby towns. Tens of thousands of residents fled the area.

Legion admits it knew of priest's kid, did nothing

VATICAN CITY (AP)—The Legion of Christ religious order, still reeling from revelations that its late founder was a pedophile, admitted Wednesday that it knew that its most famous priest had fathered a child years ago yet didn't remove him from teaching morality to seminarians or speaking publicly about ethics.

In a statement, the Legion said it was sorry it hadn't acted "earlier and more firmly" to remove the Rev. Thomas Williams from his very public ministry as a spokesman, author and high-profile television personality. It said it took responsibility for the lapse, but didn't admit when Williams' superiors knew of the existence of his child.

Williams, an American moral theologian and former superior of the Legion's Rome general office, admitted Tuesday he had had a relationship with a woman and had fathered a child "a number of years ago." He didn't identify the woman or say whether he is supporting the child, though the Legion said the child is being cared for.

Williams' admission was issued after The Associated Press last week confronted the order with the allegation against Williams, which was lodged by a Spanish association of Legion victims. The association's accusations, sent to the Legion and Vatican several weeks ago, also named other Legion priests accused of sexually abusing minors.

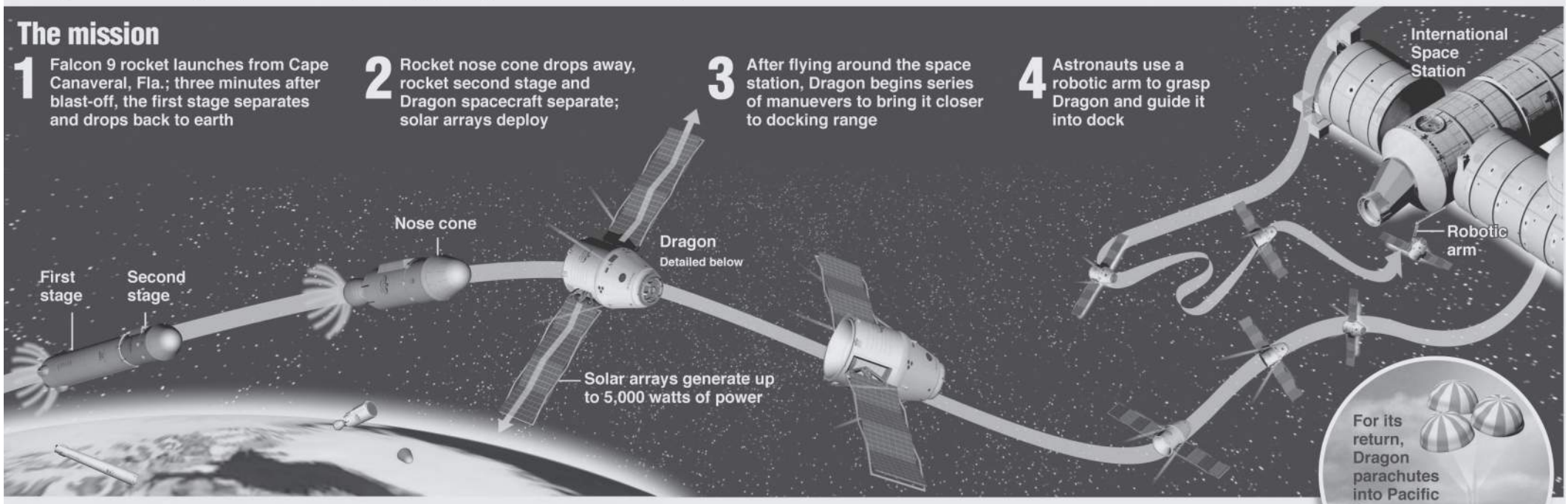
The Legion has been beset by scandal following revelations that its late founder, the Rev. Marciel Maciel, fathered three children with two women and sexually abused his seminarians. Maciel died in 2008, and in 2009 the Legion admitted to his crimes. The Maciel scandal has been particularly sensational given that the Mexican-born priest was held up by Pope John Paul II as a model for the faithful, with his priests admired for their orthodoxy and ability to bring in money and attract new seminarians.

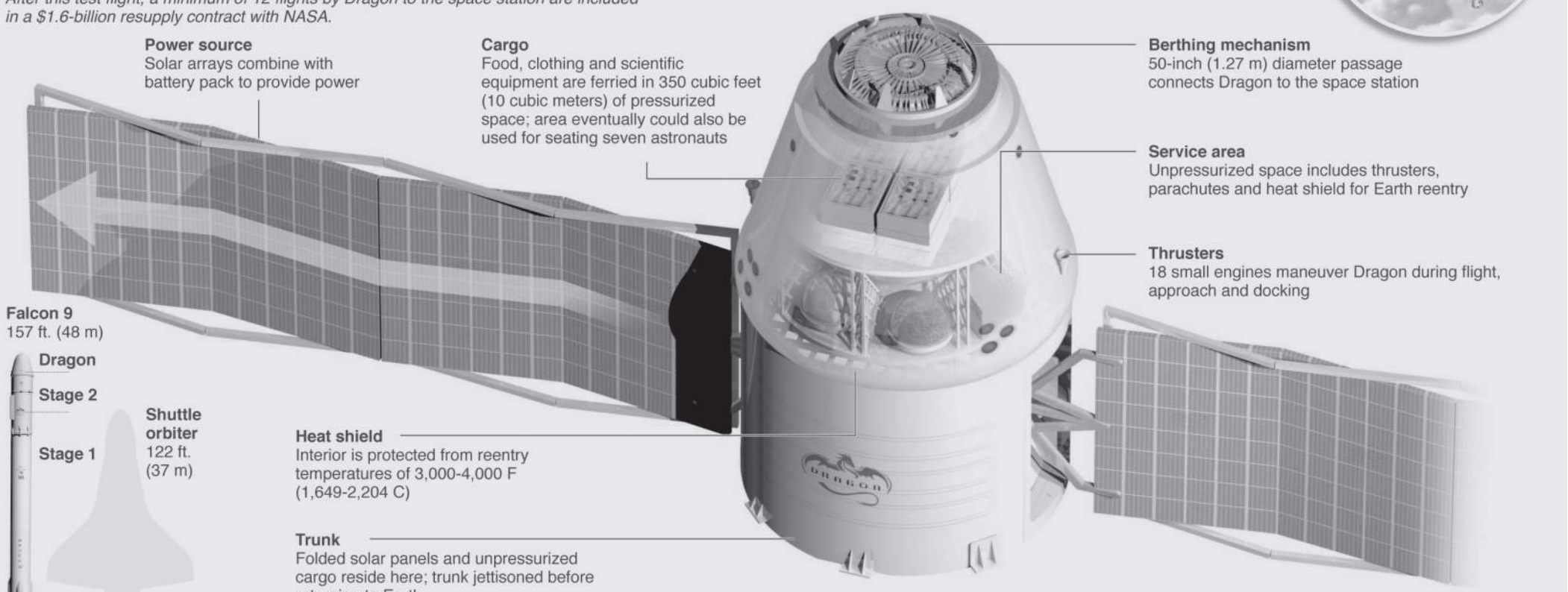
The facade, however, began to crumble in 1997 with revelations of his abuse, though it wasn't until 2006 that the Vatican sanctioned Maciel to a lifetime of prayer and penance for his crimes. Just last week, the Legion admitted that seven of its priests were under investigation by the Vatican for allegedly sexually abusing minors—suggesting that the same culture of secrecy and silence that Maciel used to cover his crimes enabled other priests to abuse children.

Focus

Private enterprise goes to space

An unmanned flight to the International Space Station this month will be the first rendezvous by a privately funded vehicle. The flight will test the Dragon spacecraft's ability to resupply the space station now that the space shuttles are retired. The mission will last about three weeks.


The mission
1 Falcon 9 rocket launches from Cape Canaveral, Fla.; three minutes after blast-off, the first stage separates and drops back to earth
2 Rocket nose cone drops away, rocket second stage and Dragon spacecraft separate; solar arrays deploy
3 After flying around the space station, Dragon begins series of manuevers to bring it closer to docking range
4 Astronauts use a robotic arm to grasp Dragon and guide it into dock
First stage
Second stage
Nose cone
Dragon
Detailed below
Solar arrays generate up to 5,000 watts of power
International Space Station
Robotic arm
For its return, Dragon parachutes into Pacific Ocean


Dragon spacecraft
After this test flight, a minimum of 12 flights by Dragon to the space station are included in a $1.6-billion resupply contract with NASA.
Power source
Solar arrays combine with battery pack to provide power
Cargo
Food, clothing and scientific equipment are ferried in 350 cubic feet (10 cubic meters) of pressurized space; area eventually could also be used for seating seven astronauts
Berthing mechanism
50-inch (1.27 m) diameter passage connects Dragon to the space station
Service area
Unpressurized space includes thrusters, parachutes and heat shield for Earth reentry
Thrusters
18 small engines maneuver Dragon during flight, approach and docking
Falcon 9
157 ft. (48 m)
Dragon
Stage 2
Stage 1
Shuttle orbiter
122 ft.
(37 m)
Heat shield
Interior is protected from reentry temperatures of 3,000-4,000 F (1,649-2,204 C)
Trunk
Folded solar panels and unpressurized cargo reside here; trunk jettisoned before returning to Earth

Source: Space Exploration Technologies, NASA
Graphic: Tom Reinken, Raoul Ranoa, Los Angeles Times

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A new frontier for space travel

By W.J. HENNIGAN
LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES—For the last half-century, space flight has been the domain of the world's superpowers.

All that is set to change as soon as Saturday when SpaceX, the private rocket company in Hawthorne, Calif., will attempt to launch a spaceship with cargo into orbit and three days later dock it with the International Space Station.

If successful, the mission could mean a major shift in the way the U.S. government handles space exploration. Instead of keeping space travel a closely guarded government function, NASA has already begun hiring privately funded start-up companies for spacecraft development and is moving toward eventually outsourcing NASA space missions.

The upcoming launch is "the first step in the handoff" to private industry, NASA Administrator Charles Bolden said. "Everybody realizes the importance of this mission," he said. "Nobody will be rooting against SpaceX."

But if the mission fails, it could trigger serious doubts about NASA's decision to hand these responsibilities to a fledgling private space industry. Doubters have already begun to raise questions. Some former astronauts, members of Congress and space experts say the current plan to subcontract space missions is foolhardy. They say the plan is risky and that outer space is no place to roll the dice on unproven companies.

On launch day, it falls to SpaceX and its 40-year-old billionaire founder, Elon Musk, to prove they're prepared.

With SpaceX engineers at the controls in Hawthorne, a towering rocket will blast off from a launch pad about 2,600 miles away in Cape Canaveral, Fla., and lift a gumdrop-shaped space capsule with a half-ton of food, water and other supplies up to the crew aboard the orbiting space station.

But delivering cargo isn't the key mission—the space station is well-provisioned. The main purpose is to demonstrate that the space capsule can rendezvous with the $100 billion orbiting outpost and link up with the space station's onboard computers. If all goes well, the crew aboard the space station will snag the spacecraft with a robotic arm and lead it in for docking. Weeks later it will be released and sent back to Earth.

"We're ready to take that next step," Musk said. "It's been a long road to this point."

Musk is a straight-talking modern-day industrialist cut in the mold of a young Howard Hughes. He's led numerous start-up companies in a wide-range of industries, dating Hollywood starlets along the way.

The sandy-haired South African emigrant first made millions when he co-founded and sold online payment business PayPal Inc. to eBay Inc. in 2002 for $1.5 billion. Armed with his personal fortune and a Rolodex full of Silicon Valley venture capitalist contacts, Musk started SpaceX, or Space Exploration Technologies Corp., and co-founded electric car company Tesla Motors Inc. in Palo Alto.

In starting SpaceX in 2002, his goal was to make money by developing and launching rockets that could carry satellites into space at a fraction of the cost of the current generation of spacecraft.

The sales pitch as a low-cost alternative has resonated with NASA. With federal money in short supply and the space shuttle fleet retired, the space agency has experienced thousands of job cuts across the country at places such as Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Johnson Space Center in Houston and Jet Propulsion Laboratory in La Canada Flintridge, Calif.

The U.S. government now has no way to space other than doling out $63 million for a seat on a Russian Soyuz rocket.

Environment

Ooh, aah: Take in Yosemite views—by computer

By TRACIE CONE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

FRESNO, Calif. (AP)—Just in time for spring snowmelt: a webcam pointed at one of Yosemite National Park's main attractions, the soaring 2,425-foot (739-meter) Yosemite Falls.

The HD camera went live on North America's tallest fall Monday, allowing anyone with computer access to watch in stunning detail as shadows race across the towering granite monolith over which Yosemite Creek crashes in a series of plunges and cascades. It's updated every 30 seconds through a high-speed DSL connection.

To those for whom the park's breathtaking scenery revives the soul, getting a fix of spiritual uplift just got a little easier. For people who've never been to Yosemite, perhaps seeing one of the park's main attractions in real time will prove too enticing to resist.

"In a lot of ways I equate it to all of the beautiful picture books that we've had on our coffee tables, or the art from the 1870s that made Yosemite exciting to people around the world when they saw it for the first time," said Michael Tollefson, president of the nonprofit Yosemite Conservancy, which placed the camera there. "This is a great way to communicate in today's media what the park is and to get people excited immediately, for better or worse."

It's the fourth webcam the nonprofit has set up—the other three are pointed toward the park icons Half Dome, Yosemite's most recognizable granite feature, and El Capitan, the 3,000-foot (900-meter) sheer-faced monolith popular with climbers. It joins a smattering of others across the nation, including one at Yellowstone's renowned geyser Old Faithful, as technology, in varying degrees of clarity, increasingly connects America's natural wonders with fans around the world.

Unlike the new 24/7 camera at Yosemite Falls, most of the webcams that exist in national parks are there for purposes other than entertaining and enticing. Some pull double duty monitoring air quality, others are there for weather updates or road conditions. Most are low resolution and so remotely located that they are updated infrequently through dial-up connections.

Often they are attached to research projects. When they break down, it can take days or weeks to get them fixed.

At Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, a webcam shows traffic on the boat launch ramp at Bullfrog, Utah (http://1.usa.gov/J4P8L5). One webcam at Sequoia Kings Canyon national park provides a view of a single oak tree so students can monitor its life cycle (http://1.usa.gov/KmOPLH). At Little Big Horn National Monument, a camera offers a distant, grainy view of the military cemetery (http://1.usa.gov/JBGXnd).

One of the most popular webcams in a national park, said NPS spokeswoman Kathy Kupper, has been one showing sled dog puppies at Denali National Park and Preserve in Alaska (http://1.usa.gov/nVhmKQ). While the NPS doesn't have an exhaustive list of cameras in parks, the ones it knows about are on the park website at nps.gov (http://1.usa.gov/KmVFQb).

The Conservancy's cameras in Yosemite National Park are positioned for dramatic impact: the movement of the sun on the falls and formation of ice in the winter, the gathering of summer rain clouds atop Half Dome, rock climbers scaling El Capitan. (http://www.yosemiteconservancy.org/webcams)

The new camera and one in the Ahwahnee Meadow pointed at Half Dome are HD optimized for computer viewing at 1280x720 pixels resolution, or 720p. The falls camera is capable of 1280x1024 pixels. Eventually the conservancy would like to place webcams in the old growth redwood forest at Mariposa Grove, and in the sub-alpine Tuloumne Meadows at 8,600 feet.

The Yosemite Falls camera will show its ebb and flow as snowmelt slows to a trickle by late summer. The Conservancy, which funds many projects in the parks, has someone to keep the cameras up and running, even in the dead of winter.

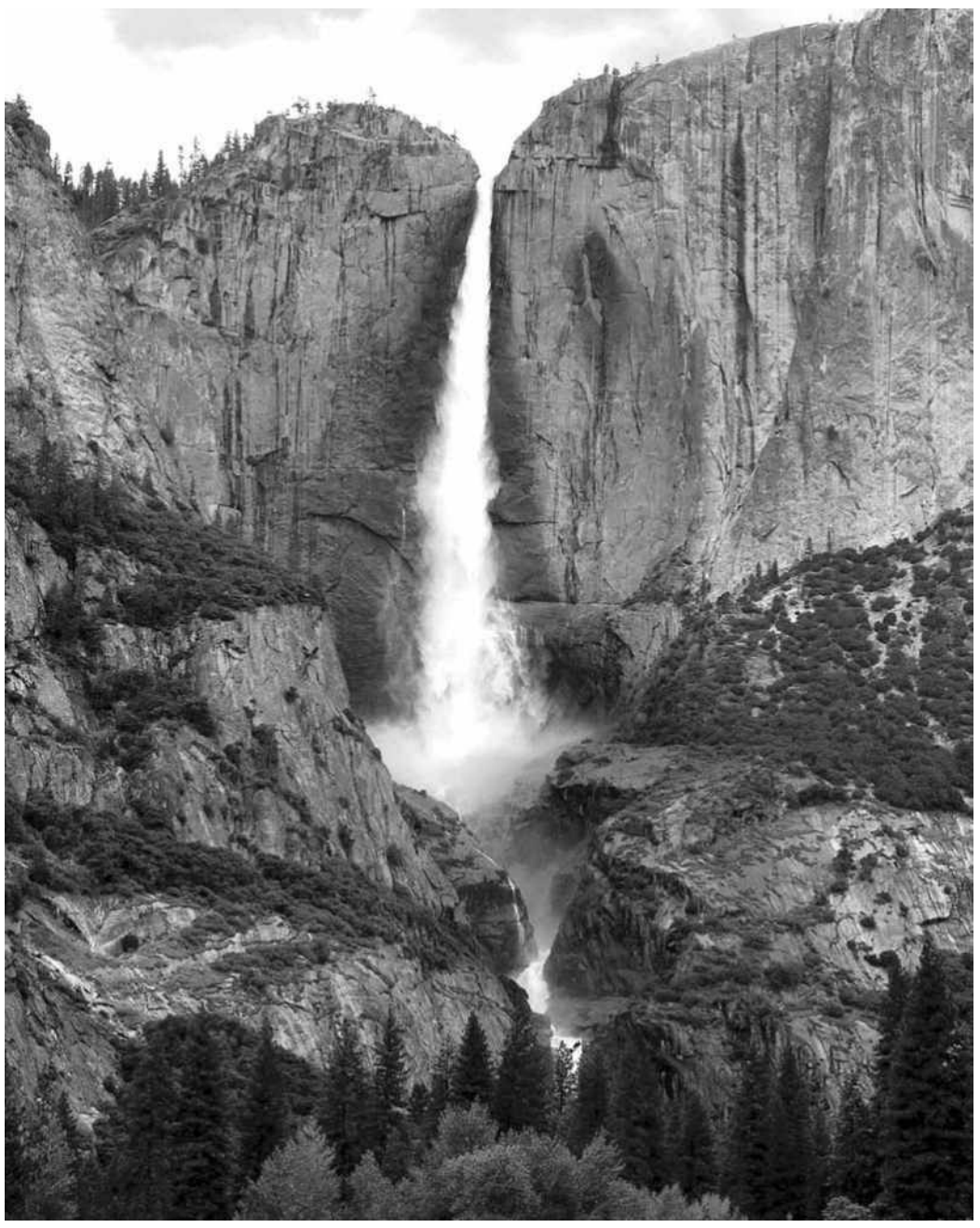
"Part of our mission is to excite people about the park and educate them so they can become committed to protecting and preserving it," Tollefson said. "One way is to offer the opportunity to keep the parks live for them on their computers."

While the parks service and the conservancy make every effort to conceal the cameras and place them on structures that already exist, it's a game for some visitors to find them. One Sacramento TV weather forecaster broadcast from the sightline of a Yosemite webcam and waved at viewers watching simultaneously by computer. At another camera, someone built a snowman in the foreground.

"People figure it out and have fun with it," Tollefson said.

Recent upgrades in DSL Internet connectivity at the Yosemite Lodge, where the new camera is affixed, made the quick streaming of a high definition camera possible.

The eventual goal, said Tollefson, is to upgrade to live video streaming at all of the Yosemite cameras that already attract 400,000 viewers a year.



One of Yosemite National Park's main attractions is the soaring 2,425-foot (739-meter) Yosemite Falls.

DO YOUR PART

Be a green beach bum this summer

MCT

"Do Your Part" and become a greener beach bum this year.

By TERRI BENNETT
MCT INFORMATION SERVICES

Are you one of millions who will enjoy some of the summer sun at the beach? Did you know that some of the choices we make at home and while on vacation can actually contaminate the very same waters we can't wait to get in? Do Your Part and become a greener beach bum this year.

IT ALL STARTS AT HOME

Even if you live hundreds and hundreds of miles away from the beach, you could still be polluting our oceans. That's because what you let go down the drain, or put on your lawn and garden can actually wind up in the ocean. So what's a beach lover to do? First, don't let household hazardous waste get in our water supply. It could be by keeping motor oil out of storm drains, properly disposing of our pets' waste, and making sure grease doesn't go down the sink. All those things lead to contamination in our waterways. Excess nutrients are another major source of contamination. When we use too much fertilizer on our yard, the excess is picked up by stormwater runoff and dumped right into our waterways. This nutrient overload causes algae to bloom which removes oxygen from the water. That literally chokes the life from vital water creatures that help improve the water's quality.

BE INFORMED ABOUT YOUR BEACH

Do you know how dirty—or clean—your favorite beach is? You might feel a little seasick once you find out how your beach ranks in terms of water quality. High amounts of bacterial pollution actually accounted for more than 24,000 beach closings and advisories in 2010. Bacterial pollution in our beach waters is a major health concern because it can give swimmers everything from pink eye to hepatitis. Keep track of what is going on at your vacation destination by checking out the National Resource Defense Council's updated guide or the EPA's online quality reports. Go to DoYourPart.com/Columns for specific links to find out how your particular beach ranks.

TAKE CARE WHILE YOU'RE THERE

Taking care of our beautiful beaches doesn't end once we arrive. My beach trick is to pack a picnic basket for my family. I fill it with snacks in reusable containers and reusable water bottles. When we're done for the day, I toss it all back in the basket and bring it back home. No need to worry about taking items to the trash or leaving them behind. If you must go the disposable route, find cutlery and cups made from recycled plastic. The critical thing is that all the items get disposed of properly and nothing winds up in the water where it can hurt marine life and water quality.

A beach vacation can be a much-needed break from the hustle and bustle of the real world. Make sure you Do Your Part before you go and while you're there to keep our water clean and healthy. It's good for you, your family, and our planet.

Terri Bennett is a veteran TV meteorologist, eco-expert and author of Do Your Part: A practical guide for everyday green living available at DoYourPart.com. Send questions to terri@doyourpart.com.

Life & Style

'Idol' favorite would continue winner monotony

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"American Idol" viewers could be in for a serious case of deja vu if Phillip Phillips wins on the Fox talent contest's 11th season finale next week.

While the soulful strummer from Leesburg, Ga., has certainly proved he can be a risk-taking showman by transforming songs like Usher's "U Got It Bad" into searing acoustic covers, a victory for the 21-year-old would prove something that everyone has suspected for a while: "Idol" voters prefer humble Caucasian heartthrobs over, well, anyone else.

Since he first caught the judges'—and America's—attention with growly renditions of Stevie Wonder and Michael Jackson hits at his audition, Phillips has seamlessly moved up the ranks, never appearing as one of the show's low-vote getters. That can't be said of his two final challengers—sassy 16-year-old Jessica Sanchez and booming 20-year-old Joshua Ledet.

And folks just seem to like Phillips, who has comfortably filled this season's reluctant heartthrob role. He's been silly, constantly flashing funny faces at the camera. He's been rebellious: When Tommy Hilfiger advised him not to wear grey on stage, he donned two shades of it. He's been sexy, even melting Ryan Seacrest's girlfriend.

Then there's the humility: Asked if he's confident of claiming "Idol" glory, Phillips said backstage last week, "Oh, gosh, no, I'm never confident. ... I'm so nervous when I get up there on stage. Josh and Jessica ... they're so much better at singing than I am."

It's also impossible to ignore the fact that the bluesy Phillips bears a striking resemblance to the past four champions.

While the musical styles of David Cook, Kris Allen, Lee DeWyze, Scotty McCreery and Phillips are varied, they're each young Caucasian male guitar players, or as they've become known by many "Idol" devotees: WGWGs—white guys with guitars. There hasn't been a female or non-white winner since Jordin Sparks bested Blake Lewis in 2007.

Lyndsey Parker, who writes Yahoo's "Reality Rocks" blog, blames the lack of diversity on block text voting among younger viewers and the introduction of contestants playing their own instruments four years ago in season seven.

Parker believes a bigger focus on instrument-playing singers, who tend to be more male than female, helped past winners like Allen and Cook ascend to the "Idol" throne with similarly masterful rearrangements of song choices, while text voting allowed obsessive fans—namely, eager young women—to tap, tap, tap their favorites to the top of the pack.

"I think people are wondering if girls or, frankly, people of color should just go audition for 'The Voice' and 'The X Factor' instead because 'Idol' has become a closed door if you're not a Caucasian guy who plays folky rock or country music," said Parker. "I know some people will be outraged if Phillip wins. That's unfair to him, but that's the reality."

Phillips' besting Sanchez, who has Filipino and Latino heritage, or Ledet, an African-American gospel singer, could prove problematic for "Idol," a contest that has always prided itself on the fact that any singer in America—be it the girl next door, teen mom down the street or even a prematurely grey-haired Southern gentleman—could capture the "Idol" title.

"I think if Phillip Phillips wins season 11, then as 'Idol' fans, we kind of have to collectively shrug our shoulders and say, 'It's clear as day. You don't have to be the best singer. You just have to be a cute white straight guy that appeals to a lot of the voting demographic,'" said Michael Slezak, a senior editor at TVLine.com who writes about "Idol."

Parker and Slezak agreed that Phillips has been outperformed by other finalists for several rounds. His low point came two weeks ago when he failed to reach the high notes on The Zombies' "Time of the Season" and ditched the melody on The Box Tops' "The Letter." However, viewers wouldn't gather that from the judges, who always pour praise on Phillips.

"I appreciate that die, sink or swim, you will still be yourself. I love it," judge Jennifer Lopez beamed to Phillips three weeks ago after he performed the Dave Matthews tune "The Stone." "It was a pretty song, but I feel it was too artsy, not right for this point in the competition. I need you to do songs that are going to get you on that last show, so you can win."

While he lacks the balladeering prowess of Sanchez and Ledet, and critics have called him a clone of Dave Matthews, Phillips' silly personality and musical certainty have seemingly made up for any vocal deficiencies he has in the eyes of voters. Matthews himself joked to New York magazine that perhaps he can retire and Phillips "can take over my band."

Slezak is less optimistic. He thinks if Phillips wins, he'll be a redux of DeWyze, the least successful "Idol" in the show's history. (DeWyze's post-"Idol" album, "Live It Up," sold just 39,000 copies when it debuted.) Besides a fondness for gritty vocals, they both share blue-collar backgrounds. DeWyze worked in a paint store. Phillips helped out in his family's pawnshop.

"'Idol' could desperately use another winner on the charts," said Slezak. "What makes it a must-watch show is the contestants you're voting for today end up playing on the radio and selling out concerts tomorrow. 'Idol' doesn't need another winner who sells 40,000 copies and gets dropped by their label. What's the point in watching if that's the end result?"

In this May 9, 2012 file photo provided by Fox, contestant Phillip Phillips performs on the singing competition series "American Idol," in Los Angeles.

AP

Mexican novelist, essayist Carlos Fuentes dies

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Author Carlos Fuentes, who played a dominant role in Latin America's novel-writing boom by delving into the failed ideals of the Mexican revolution, died Tuesday in a Mexico City hospital. He was 83.

Fuentes died at the Angeles del Pedregal hospital where he was taken after his personal doctor, Arturo Ballesteros, found him in shock in his Mexico City home. Ballesteros told reporters outside the hospital that the writer had a sudden internal hemorrhage that caused him to lose consciousness.

The loss was mourned worldwide via Twitter and across Mexican airwaves by everyone from fellow Mexican authors Elena Poniatowska and Jorge Volpi to reggaeton artist Rene Perez of the group Calle 13.

"I deeply lament the death of our beloved and admired Carlos Fuentes, a universal Mexican writer," said President Felipe Calderon on his Twitter account.

The prolific Fuentes wrote his first novel, "Where the Air is Clear," at age 29, laying the foundation for a boom in Spanish contemporary literature during the 1960s and 1970s. He published an essay on the change of power in France in the newspaper Reforma on Tuesday, the same day he died.

Fuentes

His generation of writers, including Colombia's Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Peru's Mario Vargas Llosa, drew global readership and attention to Latin American culture during a period when strongmen ruled much of the region.

Fuentes was the driving force in bringing together the Latin writers who collectively became known as "The Boom", said Raymond L. Williams, a professor of Latin American literature at the University of California, Riverside.

"It took Fuentes' vision to say if we unite forces and provide a common political and literary voice, we'll have more impact," Williams said. "His home in Pedregal (an upscale Mexico City neighborhood) was the intellectual center what brought a lot of writers together."

"The Death of Artemio Cruz," a novel about a post-revolutionary Mexico, brought Fuentes international acclaim.

He was asked in an unpublished 2006 interview why he didn't mention in the book the target of his criticism, the long-ruling, autocratic Institutional Revolutionary Party, known by its Spanish initials PRI. The PRI is now poised to take back the presidency in July 1 elections.

"There was no need to mention the PRI," Fuentes answered. "It is present by its absence."

The strapping, mustachioed author dressed smartly, ate well and moved easily between the capitals of Europe and Mexico City with his equally elegant wife, journalist Silvia Lemus.

His other classics included "Aura," "Terra Nostra" and "The Good Conscience." Many American readers know him for "The Old Gringo," a novel about San Francisco journalist Ambrose Bierce, who disappeared at the height of the 1910-1920 Mexican Revolution. That book was later made into a 1989 film starring Gregory Peck and Jane Fonda.

Mexican historian Enrique Krauze was considered Fuentes' harshest critic, saying the writer was out of touch with Mexico. But Krauze acknowledged his talents on Tuesday, calling Fuentes an "author of lasting novels and short stories, a vigorous, enriching presence."

Ex-tabloid boss Brooks faces phone hacking charges

LONDON (AP)—One of Rupert Murdoch's most trusted lieutenants and five people close to her were charged Tuesday with conspiring to hide evidence of phone hacking, bringing the scandal that has raged across Britain's media and political elite uncomfortably close to Prime Minister David Cameron.

The charges against former U.K. tabloid editor Rebekah Brooks, her husband Charlie and four aides are the first prosecutions since police reopened inquiries 18 months ago into wrongdoing by the country's scandal-hungry press.

Brooks, 43, faces three separate allegations of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice—an offense that carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

Brooks

For years, Brooks was the star in Murdoch's media empire, the top editor of two of his tabloids, a friend of his daughter Elisabeth and a close friend of Cameron, who has known her husband Charlie Brooks since they both went to an elite high school. Cameron is a neighbor, a friend and an occasional horse-riding companion of the couple.

The prospect that courts will hear potentially explosive accusations against Brooks and her husband could rock both Murdoch's global media empire and Cameron's political career.

To critics, however, Brooks was "The Witch of Wapping"—a ruthless figure at the heart of a media company in that London neighborhood that showed little remorse over its frequently intrusive reporting on celebrities and ordinary people in thrust into the public glare.

The law-breaking allegedly involved removing computers and files in the frantic days last summer when Murdoch shut down his tainted 168-year-old News of the World tabloid in an attempt to halt a tide of public disgust over the hacking furor.

Between July 6 and July 19 last year—the period covered in the charges—Brooks was struggling unsuccessfully to remain as chief executive of News International, the British division of Murdoch's News Corp. Faced with a revolt by advertisers and public uproar at the behavior of his journalists, Murdoch announced his decision to close the News of The World on July 7, while Brooks quit her high-profile role on July 15.

Alison Levitt, the legal adviser to Britain's director of public prosecutions, said Brooks and the others are alleged to have concealed documents, computers and electronic equipment from police who were conducting inquiries into phone hacking and the alleged bribery of public officials.

With her former personal assistant Cheryl Carter, Brooks is also accused of removing seven boxes of materials from News International archives, Levitt said.

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The Dictator
Thursday 4:25 7:25
Sacha Baron Cohen, Anna Faris
Horror • Rated PG 13

Synopsis
Sacha Baron Cohen re-teams with director Larry Charles on their newest slice of satire with this Paramount Pictures release concerning a foreign dictator and a goat herder (both played by Cohen) as they make their way across America. Anna Faris, Ben Kingsley, and Jason Mantzoukas head up the supporting cast.

Dark Shadows
Thursday 4:15 7:15
Johnny Depp, Helena Bonham Carter
Horror • Rated PG 13

Synopsis
Entombed for 200 years after betraying vengeful witch Angelique Bouchard (Eva Green), 18th Century vampire Barnabas Collins (Johnny Depp) returns to Collinwood Manor in 1972, only to find his estate in ruins and his family plagued by macabre secrets in Tim Burton's re-boot of the popular supernatural soap opera. It was the year 1752 when Barnabas Collins' parents attempted to elude a family curse by fleeing from England to America. 20 years later, wealthy Barnabas was the master of Collinwood Manor, and one of the most powerful figures in Collinsport, Maine.

Marvel's The Avengers
Thursday 4:10 7:10
Robert Downey, Jr., Chris Evans, Samuel L. Jackson
Action • Rated PG 13

Pirates! Band of Misfits
Thursday 4:05 7:05
Hugh Grant, Brendan Gleeson
Children's/family • Rated PG

Safe
Thursday 4:30 7:30
Jason Statham, Catherine Chan
Crime • Rated R

Three Stooges
Thursday 4:20 7:20
Will Sasso, Sean Hayes, Chris Diamantopoulos
Comedy • Rated PG

The Hunger Games
Thursday 4:00 7:00
Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson
Science fiction • Rated PG 13

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Ellen DeGeneres wins top US humor prize in DC

WASHINGTON (AP)—Ellen DeGeneres, who broke ground in 1997 as the first lead character on prime-time TV to reveal she was gay, is winning the nation's top humor prize.

The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts announced Tuesday that DeGeneres will receive the 15th annual Mark Twain Prize for American Humor. She will be honored Oct. 22 with a lineup of star performers in a tribute show that will be recorded for broadcast at a later date.

In a written statement, DeGeneres said receiving the same award as past honorees Bill Cosby, Tina Fey and Will Ferrell makes her wonder, "why didn't I get this sooner?"

It was 15 years ago—just before the humor prize was created—when DeGeneres came out on Time magazine's cover and as her character on the sitcom "Ellen" to a record 46 million viewers. The popular show began losing viewers, though, and was canceled a year later. DeGeneres said at the time that ABC caved in to fear and abandoned the show. She faced tough questions over whether the sitcom was "too gay" and if she had torpedoed her career by pushing a "gay agenda."

AP

In this May 26, 2010 file photo, Ellen DeGeneres arrives at the "American Idol" finale in Los Angeles.

"When I'm accused of becoming political, I'm showing love," DeGeneres told ABC's Diane Sawyer in a 1998 interview. "How is that political to teach love and acceptance?"

The rejection was enough to send DeGeneres into a deep depression.

"Ellen" paved the way, though, for future shows to also break the taboo of showing gay characters. "Will and Grace" would follow, along with "Glee," "Modern Family" and others.

DeGeneres bounced back with movie roles, including as the voice of a lead character in the animated film "Finding Nemo." She also has a hit talk show now in its ninth season, best-selling books and had a stint as the fourth judge on "American Idol."

Cappy McGarr, an executive producer for the Mark Twain Prize show and a Kennedy Center board member, said DeGeneres has a special style of observational humor in the tradition of Twain. She also makes people laugh across political lines.

"She's not just a comedian," he said. "She's really a miracle worker. She got the president to dance, the first lady to do push-ups and (Republican) Tom Delay to laugh."

The New Orleans native got her start as an emcee at a local comedy club in her hometown. In 1982, a videotape of her club performance won DeGeneres Showtime's "Funniest Person in America." By 1986, she appeared on "The Tonight Show" and became the first female comedian summoned to Johnny Carson's desk to chat about her performance.

The Mark Twain prize honors people who have an impact on society in the tradition of Samuel Clemens, better known as Twain, as a social commentator and satirist.

McGarr said the Kennedy Center, which awards the prize, is not making a political statement by selecting the trailblazing DeGeneres.

"This has nothing to do with any political issue," he said. "But she's brilliantly shined a light on society, and that's what Mark Twain did."

New effort filed to free OJ from Nevada prison

LAS VEGAS (AP)—A new lawyer for O.J. Simpson filed a new attempt Tuesday to gain his release from Nevada state prison, alleging the former football star was so badly represented by lawyers in his trial and previous appeals that he deserves a new trial.

A 94-page document filed Tuesday in Clark County District Court in Las Vegas faults the trial strategy and performance of attorneys Yale Galanter of Miami and Gabriel Grasso of Las Vegas, but maintains Simpson's same basic defense. It says the NFL Hall of Famer wanted to recover from sports memorabilia dealers family photos and personal mementoes stolen from him after his 1995 acquittal in the Los Angeles slayings of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ronald Goldman.

Simpson was convicted in 2008 in Las Vegas of charges including kidnapping and armed robbery in a caper in a casino hotel room crammed with two memorabilia dealers and a middle man, Simpson and five other later convicted of felonies.

Simpson, 64, was sentenced in December 2008 to nine to 33 years behind bars. He is the only one in the case still in prison.

Tuesday's filing, called a writ of habeas corpus, is a common next-step appeals strategy to blame trial and initial appeals attorneys for a defendant's conviction. If state courts deny it, it can be appealed to federal courts.

Almost all of the 22 grounds that attorney Patricia Palm of Las Vegas cited in the document fault Galanter and Grasso. Palm is due to argue the case July 3 in Clark County District Court in Las Vegas.

AP

In this Dec. 5, 2008, file photo, O.J. Simpson, left, and his lawyer Yale Galanter appear during his sentencing hearing at the Clark County Regional Justice Center in Las Vegas.

The first claim is that Galanter had a conflict of interest so severe he should have removed himself from the case. It does not raise a similar contention against Grasso.

Galanter declined comment Tuesday, saying he wanted to read the complete document and supporting appendices.

Grasso said he hadn't read the document, but "I'm behind O.J. and I hope this petition helps him get out of prison."

Simpson's current private lawyer, Malcolm LaVergne, declined comment Tuesday.

Galanter was Simpson's lawyer before the Las Vegas incident, and the document alleges he knew ahead of time and helped plan Simpson's effort to retrieve his possessions. The two men even had dinner together at a casino restaurant the night before, the document states.

Galanter told a trial judge he "wasn't there" and "had nothing to do with" the confrontation. Galantar advised Simpson the plan was "legally permissible so long as there would be no trespass and no physical force used," the new court filing said.

Simpson, meanwhile, had been drinking alcohol in the hours prior to the confrontation and had no idea anyone brought guns to the cramped room at the Palace Station casino-hotel, the document said.

"To this day, Simpson does not know whether there were actually guns pulled or displayed in the room," the document said. "Even after Simpson was arrested, Galanter repeatedly advised Simpson that the state could not prove its case, given the evidence that he intended to reclaim his own property."

Galanter and Grasso parted in 2009.

Galanter lost an appeal for Simpson's freedom to the Nevada Supreme Court that included oral arguments in June 2010. Galanter wasn't part of a failed attempt by LaVergne to get a hearing before the entire seven-member court.

Another star is dismissed from 'Dancing'

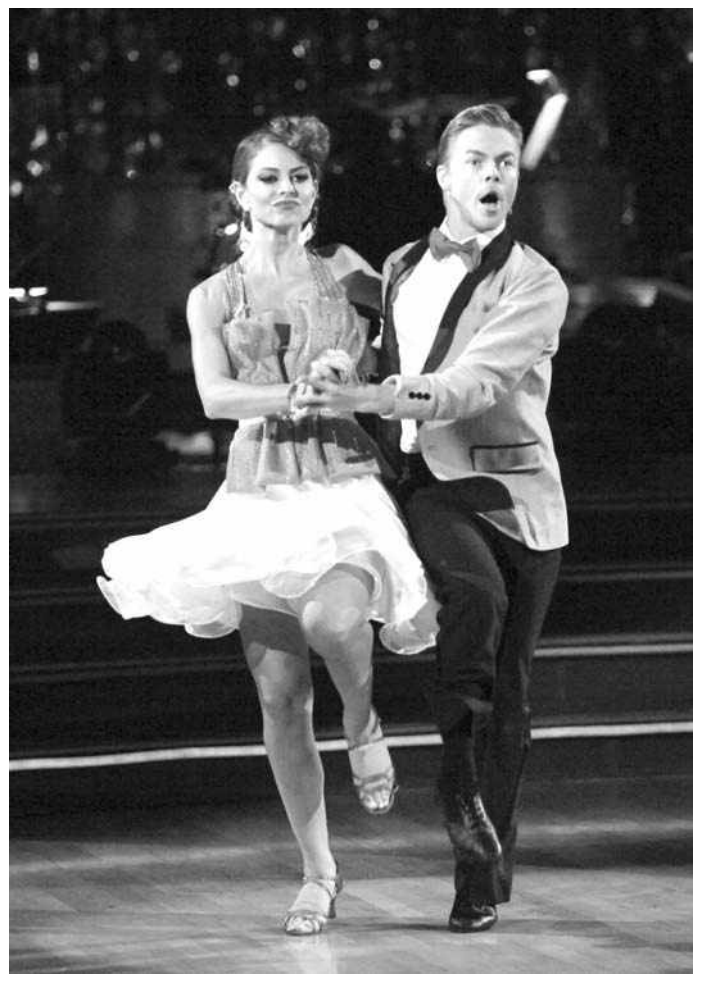
LOS ANGELES (AP)—Maria Menounos earned a perfect score on Monday's episode of "Dancing With the Stars," but on Tuesday, she was ousted from the show.

The 33-year-old TV personality was eliminated from the ABC dance-off one week shy of the finals. Judges' scores are combined with viewer votes to determine who is dismissed each week.

Singer Katherine Jenkins, actor William Levy and football star Donald Driver will compete Monday for the mirrorball trophy.

Actors Roshon Fegan, Melissa Gilbert, Jaleel White and Jack Wagner have already been eliminated, along with singers Gavin DeGraw and Gladys Knight, TV personality Sherri Shepherd, and tennis champ Martina Navratilova.

Host Tom Bergeron announced Tuesday that next season's "Dancing With the Stars" will feature contestants and champions from past seasons vying for the title.



AP

This Monday, May 14, 2012 photo shows TV personality Maria Menounos, left, and her partner Derek Hough performing on the celebrity dance competition series "Dancing with the Stars," in Los Angeles.

Aaron Sorkin to adapt 'Steve Jobs' film for Sony

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Aaron Sorkin is going from Facebook to Apple.

Sony Pictures officials say the Oscar-winning writer will write a screenplay based on the Steve Jobs biography.

Sony Pictures co-chairman Amy Pascal says Sorkin will make the film about the late Apple founder "everything that Jobs himself was: Captivating, entertaining and polarizing."

Sorkin won the adapted screenplay Academy Award for 2010's "The Social Network." The 50-year-old writer was nominated in the same category for 2011's "Moneyball."

His other credits include "Charlie Wilson's War" and "A Few Good Men." He also created TV's "The West Wing."

Actor Ashton Kutcher is set to play Jobs in a separate project.

Neil Sedaka turns his calendar girl into dino pet

NEW YORK (AP)—Where has Neil Sedaka been all these years? Wiggling his way into the hearts of a new generation, for one, through picture books accompanied by mini-albums offering playful takes on some of his hits.

At 73, the singer-songwriter enlisted the aid of his twin granddaughters as kiddie backup singers on the three-song CD tucked into "Dinosaur Pet," released this month by Imagine Publishing and inspired by his 1960 song "Calendar Girl."

It's Sedaka's second picture book using child-tailored lyrics, a popular marketing hook for other performers looking to bring their oldies music to children. Two years ago it was an alligator character for "Waking Up Is Hard to Do," based on Sedaka's "Breaking Up Is Hard to Do."

"My grandchildren love Papa Neil's old rock `n' roll songs. I used to sing them at their piano," he said in a recent interview.

He still works plenty hard entertaining grown-ups at gigs around the world. The classically trained pianist, who loves Maroon 5 and Adele, recently finished his first symphony and a piano concerto, "Manhattan Intermezzo," that he'll debut at London's Royal Albert Hall on Oct. 17.

"Being a Manhattan person, I wanted to give my musical feelings about being a New Yorker," Sedaka said.

There's also a planned musical based on his early life, "Laughter in the Rain," covering his heady days atop the charts in the `50s and early `60s and as a Brill Building songwriter at age 19, before the Beatles and other British invaders edged out the early rockers.

There were later successes as well with the help of Elton John's Rocket Records and the Sedaka-penned Captain & Tennille hit "Love Will Keep Us Together."

AP

In this April 30, 2012 file photo, singer and children's book author Neil Sedaka poses for a portrait in New York.

Cinderella story 'Ever After' to charm Broadway

NEW YORK (AP)—There will apparently be back-to-back Cinderella stories on Broadway in the coming seasons.

Producers announced Tuesday plans to bring a new musical based on the Drew Barrymore film "Ever After" in the 2013-14 season under the direction and choreography of Kathleen Marshall.

"Ever After" will feature music by Zina Goldrich and a book and lyrics by Marcy Heisle, who also are teaming up for "The Great American Mousical" at the Goodspeed Opera House.

The story is set in 16th century France, where a young noble woman learns to stand up to her scheming stepmother, befriends Leonardo Da Vinci and wins over a French prince.

It will follow a production of "Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella" on Broadway, which is slated for next season with an updated book by Douglas Carter Beane.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Drummer for Denver-based OneRepublic arrested

DENVER (AP)—Denver police say they've arrested the drummer of Denver-based band OneRepublic on suspicion of assault, destruction of private property and disturbing the peace. ABC 7News in Denver reports that 38-year-old Eddie Fisher was arrested early Tuesday morning. Fisher was being held at a Denver jail and is set to appear in court on Wednesday. Denver police did not immediately return an after-hours call from The Associated Press seeking further details on the arrest. OneRepublic's website says the band was up for a Grammy in 2008. It's most famous songs include "Apologize," "Stop and Stare," "All the Right Moves" and "Secrets."

Food Network host to drive Indy 500 pace car

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Guy Fieri, host of the Food Network's hit show "Diners, Drive-ins and Dives," will drive the pace car at the Indianapolis 500. Fieri will lead the field in a 2013 Chevrolet Corvette ZR1 on May 27 at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. It is the fastest production car ever offered by General Motors, with a top speed of 205 mph. Fieri, who owns seven restaurants and is a best-selling author, is a classic car collector, including a red 1968 Chevrolet Camaro SS convertible that is featured on his show.

Florida judge says rapper Campbell should coach

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP)—A state administrative law judge says former 2 Live Crew frontman Luther Campbell should be allowed to coach football in Florida schools. Judge Robert Meale made his recommendation Tuesday. The state refused to certify the 51-year-old rapper although he's been volunteering as an assistant coach with local approval in Miami. Education officials cited his songs' raunchy lyrics, a string of arrests and a performance with two women who removed their clothing in South Carolina. Meale noted the charges were dropped, except for a couple misdemeanor gun crimes more than 25 years ago. He also wrote that Campbell has coached inner city youth and high school football without incident for years. Campbell can take his case to an appellate court if Education Commissioner Gerard Robinson rejects Meale's recommendation.

Many possible stages await boomers looking for 'encore'

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: "Searching for 'Me' in Texas" (March 4) is not alone! A wave of 78 million baby boomers will soon leave 30-plus-year careers and are looking forward to an estimated 20 more years of life.

A vast majority of them are looking for meaningful opportunities for the second half of their lives. "Searching" should seek out a non-profit organization for a cause she's passionate about and offer her skilled services. If "Searching" doesn't need an income, she can volunteer.

Finally, instead of seeking a graduate degree, she could look at her local community college and find non-credit classes that interest her and participate without the pressure of credited course work.

STEPHANIE IN PHOENIX

DEAR STEPHANIE: Your suggestions are all good ones. Second careers are becoming more common, and there are many opportunities for seniors to enjoy their "encore careers." Read on for more options:

DEAR ABBY: Your advice to "Searching" was dead-on. After a 30-year career in the insurance industry, I was forced into early retirement by a corporate buyout. At 59, I was stunned and unprepared. After some soul searching, I decided I wasn't done with life. I started reading, talking to friends and praying.

There were some false starts. I tried out for the Peace Corps but backed out. I got into an income tax class that was over my head. Then I got another insurance job and found myself back in the rat race.

I made ends meet by substitute teaching and began to realize that, eons ago, I had wanted to be a teacher. (I had been talked out of it.) So I started back to college for my master's degree in teaching.

Talk about scared! It had been 33 years since I had seen the inside of a classroom. But my experience was one of the most challenging, positive and enriching I have ever known. I met wonderful people along the way and was admired for my life experience, insight and work ethic. It wasn't all sweetness and light, but if I had to do it over again I'd do it in a minute.

CATHERINE IN ILLINOIS

DEAR ABBY: "Searching" might consider volunteering with SCORE—Service Corps of Retired Executives. Her skills are needed and would be appreciated. That way she can dabble in her old work and have a sense of accomplishment.

CHARLES IN MARYLAND

DEAR ABBY: As a volunteer coordinator at a large nonprofit, I have many volunteers who discovered us as a result of a retirement search. The AARP's volunteer engagement site is www.createthegood.org, and www.volunteermatch.org is a nationwide site for searching volunteer opportunities.

"Searching" needs to think about things she would like to do but couldn't while working, and dip her toe in the water. If she tries something and it isn't a fit, she has no obligation and can try another. It may lead to a paid "encore" career or fulfill her through volunteerism.

JAN IN YARDLEY, PA.

DEAR ABBY: When I retired at 62, I decided to return to school for a graduate philosophy degree. My body may be weaker, but I like to think most of my mental faculties are intact. My first resume may generate humor, but I'll bring something to the classroom that may prove invaluable. That's 40 years of experience and 63 years of 20-20 hindsight.

I will call it a good day if I can communicate to any student that learning is fun and education has intrinsic value.

CALVERT IN NORTH CAROLINA

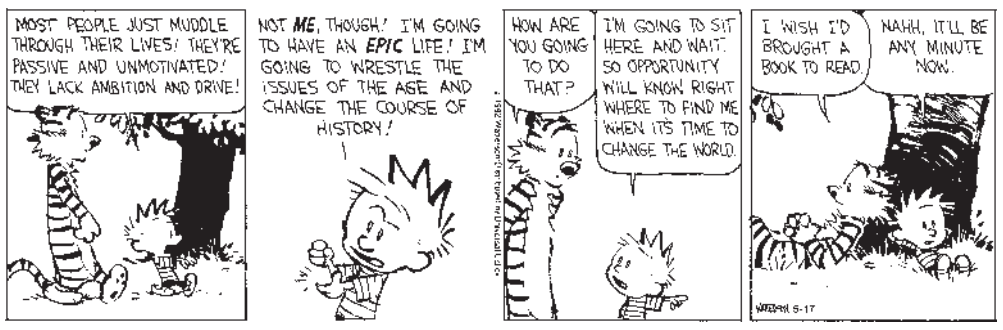
■■■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


MOST PEOPLE JUST MUDDLE THROUGH THEIR LIVES! THEY'RE PASSIVE AND UNMOTIVATED! THEY LACK AMBITION AND DRIVE!
NOT ME, THOUGH! I'M GOING TO HAVE AN EPIC LIFE! I'M GOING TO WRESTLE THE ISSUES OF THE AGE AND CHANGE THE COURSE OF HISTORY!
HOW ARE YOU GOING TO DO THAT?
I'M GOING TO SIT HERE AND WAIT. SO OPPORTUNITY WILL KNOW RIGHT WHERE TO FIND ME WHEN IT'S TIME TO CHANGE THE WORLD.
I WISH I'D BROUGHT A BOOK TO READ.
NAHH, IT'LL BE ANY MINUTE NOW.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

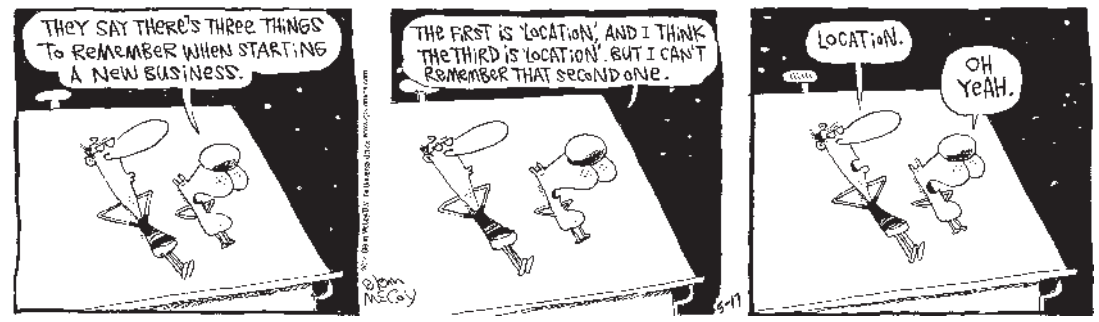
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

HEY, WOULD YOU PLEASE TURN DOWN THE MUSIC?
WHAT'D YOU SAY, OLD MAN?
BOOM BOOM
I ASKED YOU TO TURN DOWN THE MUSIC!
TAKE IT EASY, GRAMPS. WE'LL BE GONE SOON.
BOOM BOOM
SHOULDN'T YOU BE PLAYING BINGO OR WATCHING SOMETHING WORTHLESS LIKE THE NEWS?
BOOM BOOOM
www.gbatoons.com

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


THEY SAY THERE'S THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN STARTING A NEW BUSINESS.
THE FIRST IS 'LOCATION', AND I THINK THE THIRD IS 'LOCATION'. BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER THAT SECOND ONE.
LOCATION.
OH YEAH.
© Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Hot tubs
5 Bottom line?
8 Bedouin
12 Exist
13 Exploit
14 Brightest star in Lyra
15 Ear-related
16 Needle-fish
17 Blue hue
18 No-goodnik
20 Locations
22 Fawn's mama
23 Chowed down
24 Use a paper towel
27 Clerics' vesting place
32 Melody
33 Ring decision
34 Ball prop
35 Bishop, often
38 Now, on a memo
39 Pitch
40 Under-stood
42 Mountain range
45 Whole
49 Comedy Central's Daniel
50 — de deux
52 Paradise
53 "Beetle Bailey" pooch
54 Perch
55 Coaster
56 Nasty stinger
57 Type squares
58 "— of the D'Urber-villes"

DOWN

1 Unkempt one
2 Pocket bread
3 Eager, and then some
4 Withdraw
5 Hints at
6 "Born in the —"
7 Griffin of old TV
8 Forward, in Florence
9 Asks
10 Malaria symptom
11 Sheepish remarks
19 With 41-Down, continue
21 Listener
24 Bankroll
25 Midafter-noon, in a way
26 Disap-provers' demon-strations
28 Alias (Abbr.)
29 Creates a jam
30 Earl Grey, for one
31 "Uh-huh"
36 Drive-in staffer
37 Blunder
38 Authen-ticate
41 See 19-Down
42 Pack away
43 Greek vowel
44 Cathedral feature
46 Between jobs
47 Roger of "Cheers"
48 Tackles' team-mates
51 Intention

Solution time: 25 mins.

T	I	P	S		C	R	S		A	S	P	S
B	O	L	T		P	I	T		S	T	O	P
S	T	A	R	G	A	Z	E		T	A	L	E
P	A	Y	E	E			M	A	R	R	O	W
			E	M	I	R		R	O	D		
P	E	S	T		V	A	S	T		U	R	N
H	O	I		M	E	M	O	S		S	U	E
D	N	A		F	S	P	Y		S	T	F	W
			R	O	E		S	A	F	E		
E	S	T	A	T	E			I	A	M	B	I
D	I	R	T		S	T	A	R	W	A	R	S
G	L	E	E		A	I	D		A	D	A	M
E	L	K	S		U	S	E		Y	E	N	S

Yesterday's answer 5-17

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	■	8	9	10	11
12				■	13			■	14			
15				■	16			■	17			
18				19		■	20	21				
■	■	■	22			■	■	23			■	■
24	25	26		■	27	28	29				30	31
32			■	■	33			■	■	34		
35			36	37				■	38			
■	■	39			■	■	40	41		■	■	■
42	43				44	■	45			46	47	48
49				■	50	51		■	52			
53					54				55			
56				■	57			■	58			

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99c per minute. touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Nikki Reed, 24; Derek Hough, 27; Trent Reznor, 47; Bill Paxton, 57.

Happy Birthday: Do what needs to be done and the outcome will favor you. Stand up for your rights and you will feel happy and accomplished. Add a little humor and charm to whatever you present and you will sway even the most stubborn opponent. Believe in your capabilities and so will others. Your numbers are 7, 15, 18, 23, 29, 33, 47.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Balance will be key. Too much of anything will be overkill. Take a moment to enjoy something simple. Most of all, don't get dragged into melodrama. Reassess your situation, consider your options and decide based on reality and practicality. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Your strong opinions will be controversial, but they'll also help you see who supports you and who doesn't. Stay positive and refrain from showing your disappointment to those who are heading in a different direction. Focus on the here and now. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): A strategic budget will keep your money safe. Put a long-term plan in place that will put your mind at ease regarding your ability to take care of your needs in the future. An offer someone makes may be laced with ulterior motives. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Your adaptability will surprise people. Helping a cause or someone in need will bring you satisfaction and enhance your reputation. New friendships will offer greater potential to advance. A venture you pursue will improve your status. ✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Compromise and you will eventually get the upper hand. A passionate approach will be too engaging for others to ignore. Your ability to make the most with what you've got will bring you victory. Love is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Keep a close watch on your finances. An impulsive purchase will leave you short. Pleasing someone may help you get ahead at work but will probably cause friction at home. An interesting comment will help you find other uses for your skills. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Concentrate on doing whatever you can to save money. You will make an impression on someone important if you can get your finances in order and secure your domestic environment. Work with the budget you have to add to your comfort at home. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Get approval before you move forward with one of your ideas or plans. There will be people around you who aren't willing to take the same risks. Explain your position in order to advance without opposition. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Problems with a friend, relative or neighbor will escalate if you don't address complaints immediately. Take responsibility and make alterations to satisfy those wanting to take action against you. Focus on love during the evening hours. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Make home improvements that will contribute to comfort and fun for you, your family or friends. Your determination to please people you love will enhance your relationships and ease any tension that has been building. An investment will pay off. ✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Stop repeating your mistakes. Address problems quickly so you can move on. Don't let anyone down, including you, and start by better organizing your time. Love is apparent, but honesty will make it happen. Less talk, more action. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Do whatever it takes to win support. The more adaptable you are, the easier it will be to adjust your skills to meet currents requirements. Reconnecting to someone who can contribute to your plan will be more helpful than you anticipate. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are entertaining, fun-loving and an instigator. You strive for happiness and satisfaction.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		7						
5					9	4		
1		3		5				
	2	8	3	4			1	
3								8
	5			6	8	9	4	
				2		1		5
		2	7					4
						6		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 5/17

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

2	8	9	6	7	5	1	4	3
1	4	6	3	8	9	7	5	2
3	5	7	4	1	2	6	9	8
8	1	4	2	3	6	5	7	9
9	3	2	7	5	4	8	1	6
7	6	5	1	9	8	3	2	4
6	7	8	9	2	1	4	3	5
4	2	3	5	6	7	9	8	1
5	9	1	8	4	3	2	6	7

Difficulty Level ★★★ 5/16

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

BIDDING WARS Solution: 7 letters

C	W	C	L	H	Y	S	E	S	A	H	C	R	U	P
R	O	I	E	E	I	A	B	U	Y	E	R	S	R	E
O	S	U	N	G	T	G	Ⓒ	Ⓐ	Ⓢ	Ⓗ	D	I	R	B
T	S	O	N	N	N	T	H	C	D	N	C	U	O	N
C	M	E	E	T	I	A	I	E	E	E	T	O	R	E
E	D	G	R	O	E	N	R	D	S	P	M	U	D	L
L	A	E	N	U	V	R	G	I	A	T	T	A	S	A
L	B	S	A	E	S	S	O	C	N	E	R	E	N	S
O	E	R	S	L	D	O	Q	F	R	T	R	O	D	D
C	L	T	O	E	E	D	L	U	F	V	E	P	M	I
T	O	I	E	K	T	R	E	C	I	E	P	N	S	B
R	W	C	M	M	E	S	U	C	E	C	R	R	S	S
E	X	I	T	I	O	R	E	C	I	R	K	I	T	E
E	F	A	S	T	T	H	S	E	E	D	O	A	I	L
S	T	A	R	T	E	K	R	A	M	S	E	F	W	L

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Accepted, Agent, Assets, Auction, Below, Bids, Boom, Brokers, Buyers, Capture, Cash, Collector, Counteroffer, Dealer, Decide, Demand, Ends, Exceeds, Fair, Fast, Foreclosures, Highest, Home, Intense, Investor, Limit, List, Market, Money, Prices, Purchase, Quick, Range, Return, Sale, Secure, Sell, Service, Signed, Spread, Start, Trade, Twist, Winning, Wits

Yesterday's Answer: Croissants

SALE: The special Wonderword for 6/25 goes to you. Log on to the puzzle daily — and be the first to solve it correctly. We'll award 5 additional lines to the back of your paycheck. Limit one per player. Void where prohibited by law. Includes $3 postage for 5 lines; each additional line, $1. Mail to: Wonderword, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, MO 64106. Official rules: 1-913-422-7400.

CLASSIFIED ADS

WHATZIT Solution: He who laughs last, laughs longest

FOR SALE

2007 Nissan Quest minivan. Excellent condition. Color: Red, Mileage 44,700, Price: $11,500. If interested please call 287-7676

WANTED TO BUY

Need cash fast??? We want to buy your OnePass miles or Skymiles!!! Call 888-2205.

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

Sandy Beach Homes 3BR, 2BTH beachfront Chalan Kanoa. Security cams, back-up power/water, washer/dryer in unit, AC, solar water heater. Income eligibility req. apply. $695/mo 235-7263. www.sandybeachhomes.net

Ocean View Terraces. Luxury 2BR & 1BTH Apts w/private balcony & beautiful view. Rooms w/ A/C & Fully Furnished. Back-up Generator. Free Wi-Fi. Laundry Area. Nightime security. $600/mo. Call 235-6527/28 or 285-1317.

Sunset View Terraces. Luxury 2BR & 1BTH Apts w/private balcony & beautiful view. Rooms w/ A/C & Fully Furnished. Back-up Generator. Free Wi-Fi. Laundry Area. Nightime security. $550. Call 235-6527/28 or 285-1317.

Lower Navy Hill Apts. Newly renovated bldg., 3BR & 2BTH. Rooms w/ A/C & fully furnished. Back-up generator. Free Wi-Fi, EPA Solar Water Heater. Laundry area. Nightime security. $450/mo. Call 235-6527/28 or 285-1317.

In the United States District Court
For the Northern Mariana Islands
Bankruptcy Division

In re Northern Mariana Islands Retirement Fund

Bankr. Case No. 12-00003

NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Motion to Dismiss filed by the CNMI Government in the above-entitled matter is set for hearing before Hon. Robert J. Faris on **June 1, 2012** at **9:30 a.m.** in the United States District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands, 2nd Floor, Horiguchi Building, Garapan, Saipan.

Dated: May 16, 2012

By: Office of the Attorney General

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

DONALD W. BURCHER, Jr., Petitioner,
vs.
DOROTHY JOY M. BURCHER, Respondent.

FCD-DI CIVIL ACTION NO. 11-0443

ORDER FOR RESPONDENT DOROTHY JOY M. BURCHER TO APPEAR OR PLEAD

TO: DOROTHY JOY M. BURCHER

Pursuant to 7 CMC § 1301,YOU are hereby ORDERED to make a personal appearance before the Court or else to file any written response you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the Court, within twenty (20) days after publication of this Order in one of the two major daily newspapers in the Commonwealth. You are further directed to deliver or mail a copy of any responsive pleading that you file to Petitioner's attorney, Thomas E. Clifford, whose address is:

2nd Floor, Alexander Building,
San Jose
P.O. Box 506514
Saipan, MP 96950

as soon as practicable after filing. Any responsive pleading should be filed with Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. If you fail either to make a personal appearance or to file a written response in accordance with this Order, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief requested in the Complaint.

So ORDERED this 23rd day of January, 2012.

/s/ The Honorable PERRY B. INOS
Associate Judge

GARAGE SALE

Leaving Island, many household items to sell!

WHEN: Saturday, May 19, 2012
TIME: 7:00am
LOCATION: Red and white house on the hill behind the Big Blue water tank, in Papago at the intersection of Isa Drive and Mulberry Lane. House is located between Santos Acres and San Vicente Post Office. Signs will be posted for guide.

Call 483-5324 for directions.

Operations Manager

$900.00 to 1,000.00/month
Working Days & Time:
Tuesday to Saturday/5pm to 2am
Oversees all operations at the bar including staffing, employee schedules, event planning, staff functions and responsibilities.
Do other related duties.

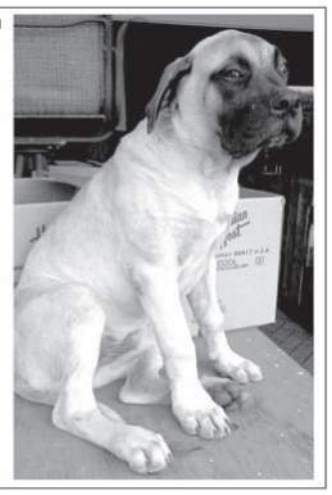
If interested send resume and copy of police clearance to

EMI INTERNATIONAL CO., LTD.
P.O. BOX 5140 CHRB,
SAIPAN, MP 96950
Tel.: 670-287-3377

LOST PUPPY

$CASH REWARD$

Male Fawn Bull Mastiff
Last Seen Friday March 30th
670-989-4637
670-483-9152



Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, thou make me see everything and show me the way to reach my ideal. You who give me the divine gift to forgive & forget the wrong that is done to me & who are in all instances of my life with me. I, in this short dialogue, want to thank you for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from you, no matter how great the material desires may be. I want to be with you and my loved ones in your perpetual glory. AMEN. (A person must pray this for three consecutive days without stating his/her wish. After the 3rd day, the wish will be granted no matter how difficult it may be. Promise to publish this as soon as your favor has been granted.)

Novena to Saint Jude

Oh Holy St. Jude, Apostle and Martyr, great in virtue, rich in miracles, near Kingsman of Jesus Christ and faithful intercessor of all who invoke your special patronage in time of need. To you I have recourse from the depth of my heart and humbly beg, to whom God has given special great power, to come to my assistance in my present and urgent petition, I return to promised to make name known and cause to be invoke. (Say 3 Our Fathers, 3 Hail Marys and 3 Glorys for nice consecutive days, publication must be promised.) St. Jude, pray for us all who invoke your aid. (This novena has never been known to fail.

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Call 235-NEWS

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED LINER ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 6-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $27 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$15	$27
• 5-Liner	$24	$39
• 3-Liner with picture	$24	$42
• 5-Liner with picture	$36	$57

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

HA HA
HO HO
HE HE HEE

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www.facebook.com/dingbatsgames

Find today's solution in classified section

Rested Spurs win Game 1 over weary Clippers

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—So much for getting rusty: The San Antonio Spurs didn't miss a beat after a weeklong break, extending a winning streak that few NBA teams have ever sustained in the playoffs.

The weary Los Angeles Clippers looked just beaten—and making matters worse, they're even a little more beat-up than when they got here.

Tim Duncan had 26 points and 10 rebounds following an eight-day layoff for the top-seeded Spurs, who wore down Los Angeles in the Clippers' sixth game in 11 days and won Game 1 of their Western Conference semifinals series, 108-92 on Tuesday night.

"It's hard to tell if they were tired or not. If we were rusty or not," Spurs guard Manu Ginobili said. "The game just developed that way it did."

By that, he meant the latest Spurs blowout.

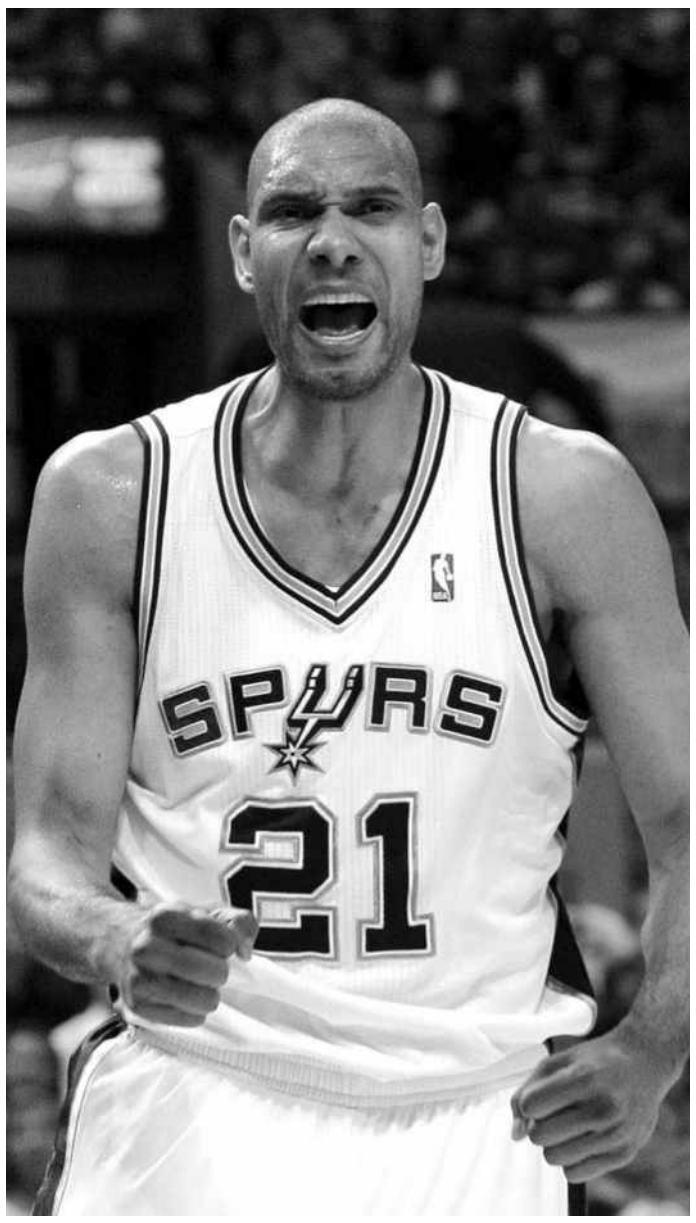
The Spurs have won 15 in a row, haven't lost in more than a month and are winning by an average margin of nearly 17 points during that span. It's the longest winning streak sustained in the NBA playoffs since the 2004 Spurs carried 17 straight wins into the second round that season.

That Spurs team, however, wound up dropping four straight to the Lakers and lost that series. The Clippers have a lot of work to do if they're going to stage a similar stunner, and a good start would be getting healthy.

Blake Griffin scored 15 points in 28 minutes a day after estimating his sprained left knee had him feeling "80 percent" at best. The All-Star said he became tired quicker than usual, and also turned his left ankle early in the game.

"But I'll get back in the training room, get treatment and hope to be better the next game," Griffin said.

The marquee matchup of the series—All-Star point guards Tony Parker and Chris Paul—began with a fizzle.



AP

San Antonio Spurs' Tim Duncan reacts after a play during the fourth quarter of Game 1 of an NBA basketball Western Conference semifinal playoff series against the Los Angeles Clippers, Tuesday, May 15, 2012, in San Antonio.

Paul, who ended the first round with an aching hip, scored just six points and didn't make a single basket in the second half. Parker was barely any batter, putting together seven points and 11 assists, and didn't talk to reporters after the game.

Paul did face the media after his worst playoff game since scoring four points in a loss to Denver in 2009. But not until after a quick chat with his young son.

"Good game, Daddy," Paul's son said in the locker room.

"No, bad game," Paul told him. "Daddy had a bad game. Daddy couldn't make a shot."

Paul, who was 3 of 13 from the floor, gave a more elaborate explanation to reporters.

"I felt I got all the shots that I wanted. I just didn't make them," Paul said. "That's the most frustrating part. Getting to where I wanted to and not seeing them go down. Can't do that in the playoffs."

Game 2 is Thursday night.

That gives the beat-up and banged-up Clippers one full day of rest—which is all the time they've had to recover between games for the past week and a half. Los Angeles couldn't even fly home first after knocking out the Grizzlies on Sunday in Game 7 of a grueling series that had the Clippers hobbling next to Texas.

Rookie Kawhi Leonard added 16 points, hitting all three of his 3s, and Danny Green added 15 points for the Spurs.

Caron Butler scored 15 points and Nick Young had 13 for the Clippers. Los Angeles cut the deficit to single digits with a 10-burst in the fourth quarter before San Antonio ran away with its 11th double-digit victory during this dominating winning streak.

The Clippers didn't even need San Antonio's help getting more bumps and bruises: Mo Williams, already playing with his sore right fingers taped, took a lump on the head when teammate Reggie Evans kicked him with an errant foot after Williams fell on his back in the lane.

Williams wobbled when he tried standing, sat back down, and the Clippers burned a timeout. He never left the game, but the Clippers weren't getting any fresher.

Parker, meanwhile, finally felt the hard knocks and slow-him-down shoves that Utah repeatedly promised but never delivered in the first round. Sometimes, the All-Star looked in vain to officials when the whistle didn't blow. When that didn't work once in the first quarter, he kept jabbering about a no-call on the last possession while lining up to shoot free throws on the current one.

Spurs coach Gregg Popovich, pacing and sensing an impending technical foul, silenced his leading scorer.

"Tony!" Popovich snapped from the sideline. "Shoot!"

Parker waved off the NBA Coach of the Year—he was under control. But his frustrations didn't end there. He was 1 for 9 despite playing 38 minutes, scoring all but two of his points at the foul line.

"He didn't score, but he got 11 assists," Ginobili said. "That's who we are. Sometimes it's not going to be him."

Pacers 78, Heat 75

In Miami, David West scored 16 points and grabbed 10 rebounds, and George Hill added 15 as the Indiana Pacers took home-court advantage away from Miami by beating the Heat 78-75 in Game 2 of the teams' Eastern Conference semifinal series Tuesday.

LeBron James scored 28 points for Miami and Dwyane Wade finished with 24, but both missed big chances for the Heat late. James missed two free throws with 54.3 seconds left and Miami down one, and Wade was short on a layup that would have tied the game with 16 seconds remaining.

Mario Chalmers' 3-pointer to tie bounced away on the final play, and the series was tied 1-1.

Danny Granger scored 11 points and Paul George added 10 for Indiana, which took advantage of Heat forward Chris Bosh's absence and outrebounded Miami 50-40.

Game 3 is Thursday in Indianapolis.

James had a chance to give Miami the lead with 1:22 left, but his shot was blocked from behind by George, who was fouled two seconds later. He missed both free throws, keeping the Indiana lead at 76-75. And after Wade missed a jumper, James was fouled by Granger—his sixth—battling for the rebound with 54.3 seconds remaining.

James couldn't connect on either, and the Heat didn't score again.

Bosh is expected to miss the rest of the series with a strained abdominal muscle. Without him, James and Wade combined for 52 points—and no other Miami player scored more than five.

Kobe: I don't take charges

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Lakers star Kobe Bryant says he doesn't take charges, and he's got a reason for it.

Based on his own analysis of NBA greats from Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen to Magic Johnson and Larry Bird, Bryant believes there's too much of a health risk to get run over by an opponent and go crashing to the floor repeatedly.

"I learned from my predecessors, man," Bryant said Tuesday. "Pippen had a (messed) up back taking charges. Bird had a (messed) up back taking charges.

"I said, `I'm not taking charges.' I figured that (stuff) out at an early age."

The five-time NBA champion says no one ever presented the theory to him that he could prolong his career if he didn't try to draw offensive fouls against his opponents. It was just his own observations.

"I've seen them take charges and lay there with a messed-up back. I've seen Michael not take one ... charge and he's healthy his whole career, and the same thing with Magic," Bryant said.

"I might not be the smartest guy in the room but I can figure that (stuff) out."

The topic came up after the Lakers forced only four Oklahoma City Thunder turnovers in a 119-90 blowout loss in Game 1 of the Western Conference semifinals. The NBA record for fewest turnovers in a game is three.

Oklahoma City had averaged a league-worst 16.4 turnovers in the regular season, but Los Angeles had the fewest steals and forced the least turnovers.

Bryant rejected the idea that the Lakers should try to extend their defense and disrupt Oklahoma City's passes and said: "We're not a passing lanes kind of team. We're a pack it in type of team."

Yet he also doesn't think Lakers are willing to stand in the way when opponents come charging in.

"We've got a couple guys that take charges but for the most part the one guy that took charges (Derek Fisher) is now playing in Oklahoma," Bryant said.

"I don't take charges, Metta (World Peace) doesn't take charges. Steve (Blake) will take a charge every now and then, but most everybody else just stands up and plays."

Bryant said that drawing charges is "definitely a skill," pointing out that coach Mike Krzyzewski does drills to teach it at Duke. He singled out Miami's Shane Battier, a former Duke star, for being among the best at it in today's game but said he has no interest in learning.

Bryant's coach, Mike Brown, has the opposing viewpoint.

"I'm a big charge guy. I'm more a charge guy than a shot-blocking guy," he said, noting that even 7-foot-3 center Zydrunas Ilgauskas would drop to the floor to take charges for him in Cleveland.

While some NBA teams keep track of how many charges their players draw, Bryant certainly isn't keeping up with his own.

"I probably took one last year. By accident probably," he joked. "I couldn't get out of the way."

Cavaliers' Irving selected NBA's top rookie

INDEPENDENCE, Ohio (AP)—Once Kyrie Irving finished cracking jokes, thanking Cleveland's fans, his teammates and coaches, he looked down from the podium at the person who promised this would happen.

He was the NBA's Rookie of the Year.

"This award is for us," Irving said to his father, Dred, who raised his son after his wife, Elizabeth, died 15 years ago. "We're bringing it back home and we're going to put it right on the mantle and we're going to put some flashing lights on it so it shines throughout the whole entire house."

This season, Irving shined brightest.

The 20-year-old ran away in voting by a nationwide media panel that could have handed in ballots with two months left in the season. There was really no other choice.

Irving received 117 of 120 possible first-place votes from writers and broadcasters and finished with 592 points, more than three times as many as Minnesota's Ricky Rubio (170), who finished second despite missing most of the season with a knee injury. Denver's Kenneth Faried (129) was a distant third.

Faried, San Antonio's Kawhi Leonard and New York's Iman Shumpert received the other first-place votes, stopping Irving from joining Blake Griffin (2011), David Robinson (1990) and Ralph Sampson (1984) as the only players to win the award unanimously.

Irving played beyond his years and above everyone's expectations—including his own—this season when he routinely took over games in the fourth quarter and renewed the hopes of a Cleveland franchise still putting together the pieces after LeBron James left as a free agent two summers ago.

Irving always felt the award was within his reach.

"It was a goal of mine," Irving said. "I kept it on the back burner. I knew as long as we won games and we beat great teams that it was going to come."

The first pick in last year's draft, Irving led all rookies—and the Cavs—in scoring with 18.5 points per game. He also led first-year players in field-goal percentage (46.8), was second in assists (5.4) and became one of just six rookies in league history to average at least 18 points and five assists.

However, it was the other elements of his game—a nasty crossover dribble, a fearless desire to get to the basket, and a clutch, cold-blooded instinct in the fourth quarter—that separated him from the others.

Cavs coach Byron Scott knew Irving was special long before he made his pro debut.

"The day we brought him in for his individual workout before the draft, I thought he was definitely the best player that we had," Scott said.

Lawrie ejected after wild rage, Rays beat Jays

TORONTO (AP)—Blue Jays third baseman Brett Lawrie slammed his batting helmet to the ground and it ricocheted into plate umpire Bill Miller as the ninth inning turned nasty Tuesday in Toronto's 4-3 loss to the Tampa Bay Rays.

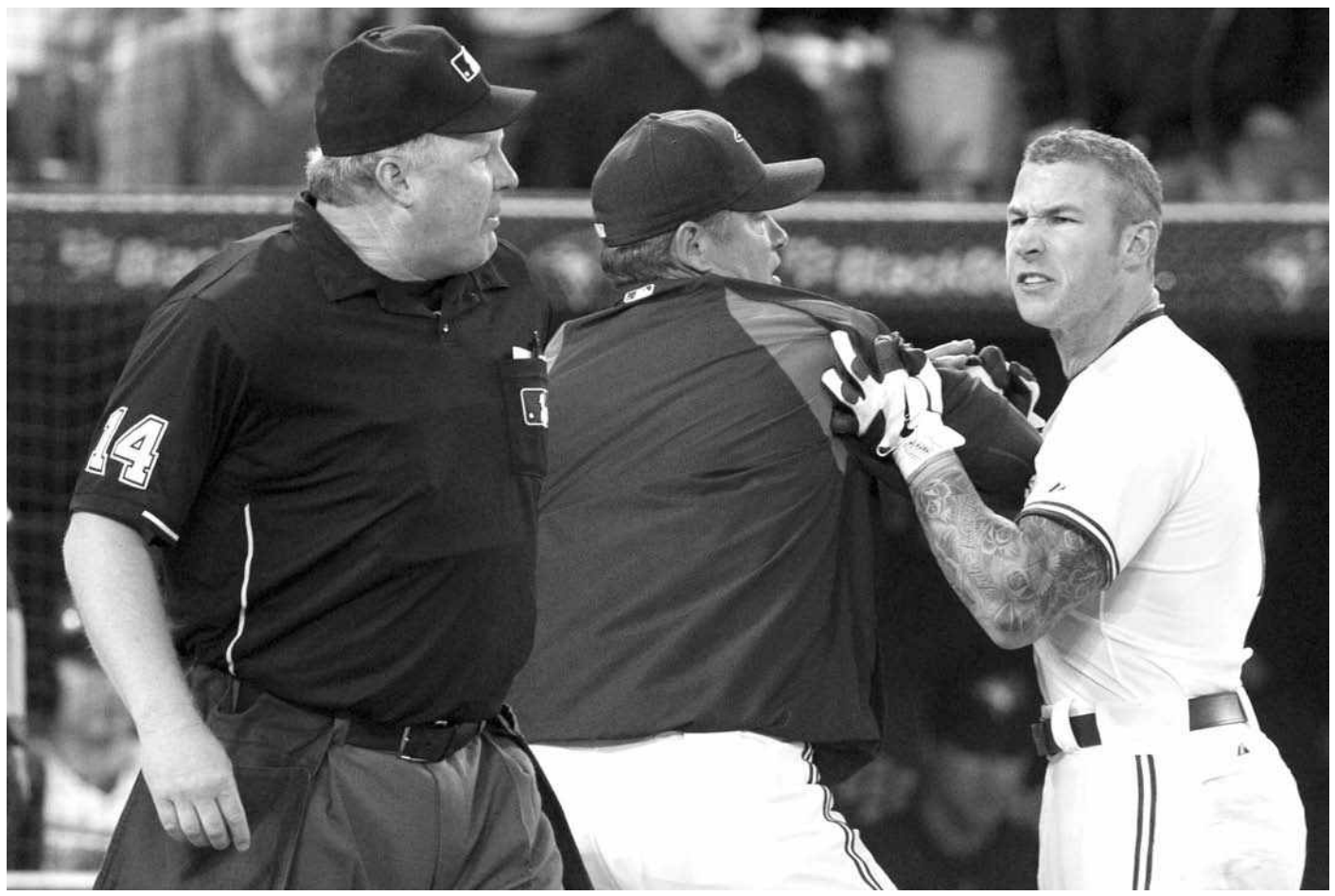
Lawrie was ejected for arguing after he struck out looking. Lawrie took several steps toward Miller, wound up with his right arm and threw down his helmet. It bounced up and struck Miller around the right hip—a suspension from Major League Baseball is all but certain.

Toronto manager John Farrell came out to restrain the 22-year-old Lawrie, who is in his first full season in the majors. After Lawrie returned to the dugout, Farrell was ejected for arguing the call.

Miller was then hit by a drink thrown by a fan as he headed off the field after the game. Police and stadium security were seen pointing into the crowd after an exchange between fans and umpires as the crew headed off the field through the visitors' dugout.

David Price (6-2) won for the fifth time in six starts, Sean Rodriguez homered and the Rays rallied from a 3-0 deficit.

Edwin Encarnacion homered for the Blue Jays.



AP

Toronto Blue Jays Manager John Farrell restrains Blue Jays third baseman Brett Lawrie as he confronts Home Plate umpire Bill Miller on a strike out call during the ninth inning of a baseball game against Tampa Bay Rays in Toronto on Tuesday May 15 , 2012.

Red Sox 5, Mariners 0

In Boston, Josh Beckett redeemed himself less than a week after being booed off the mound, striking out a season-high nine batters as Boston shut out Seattle to extended its winning streak to five.

Beckett (3-4) scattered four hits over seven innings before being pulled as a steady rain started to fall late in the afternoon.

Beckett was celebrating his 32nd birthday and could not have atoned better for his previous start, when he was pulled after allowing seven runs in 2 1-3 innings. Boston fans already were seething that day over news Beckett had played golf the week before after being scratched from a start because of back stiffness.

David Ortiz hit his eighth homer and scored a run after putting down a surprise bunt to lead off the fifth inning. Mike Aviles hit a pair of doubles and drove in two runs as Boston completed a 5-1 homestand.

Orioles 5, Yankees 2

In Baltimore, Chen Wei-yin pitched seven innings of four-hit ball and Adam Jones homered as Baltimore beat CC Sabathia and New York.

J.J. Hardy drove in two runs for Baltimore, which earned a split of the two-game series and improved to 1-4 at home against New York.

Chen (4-0) allowed two runs, struck out four and walked two in a masterful performance. Making his seventh major league start, the 26-year-old Taiwan native took a shutout into the seventh inning.

Pedro Strop worked the eighth and Jim Johnson got three outs for his 12th save in 12 tries.

Curtis Granderson hit his 13th homer for New York.

Angels 4, Athletics 0

In Anaheim, California, Ervin Santana struck out nine during 7 2-3 innings of four-hit ball and Albert Pujols drove in two runs with infield singles as the Los Angeles Angels bounced back from yet another shutout loss.

Mike Trout went 3 for 4 with a homer and three runs scored for the Angels, who finally produced enough offense to back a strong performance by Santana (2-6). The Dominican right-hander retired 16 in a row early, winning his second straight start after a rocky beginning to the season.

Bartolo Colon (3-4) allowed 12 hits while pitching into the seventh inning for the A's, who were off to an AL-best 8-4 start in May.

Royals 7, Rangers 4

In Arlington, Texas, Mike Moustakas homered, and Billy Butler and Brayan Pena each drove in a pair of runs as Kansas City kept Texas' potent offense in check for a second straight game.

The Royals took advantage of two throwing errors by Rangers starter Colby Lewis (3-3) to score five unearned runs in the first two innings.

Moustakas reached base for a 22nd consecutive game to help make a winner of Vin Mazzaro, who made his first start this season. Mazzaro (1-0) allowed three runs and seven hits in five innings.

Rangers star Josh Hamilton extended his hitting streak to 15 games with a single and added a sacrifice fly.

Indians 5, Twins 0

In Minneapolis, Derek Lowe pitched his first shutout in nearly seven years, throwing a six-hitter to lead Cleveland over Minnesota.

Choo Shin-soo, the Indians' new leadoff man, scored after a leadoff double in the third inning and then hit the first of three Cleveland home runs in the fifth against Jason Marquis (2-3). Asdrubal Cabrera and Carlos Santana also homered.

The 38-year-old Lowe (6-1) was at his sinker-balling best, walking four without a strikeout. He induced four double-play grounders in winning his fourth straight decision.

Tigers 10, White Sox 8

In Chicago, Miguel Cabrera, Ryan Raburn and Austin Jackson homered during an eight-run rally in the sixth inning as Detroit defeated Chicago.

The Tigers hung on in the ninth despite closer Jose Valverde leaving with tightness in his lower back. Paul Konerko singled and A.J. Pierzynski doubled with two outs for his fifth hit.

Valverde went to a 3-1 count on Alex Rios and left. Octavio Dotel issued a fourth ball and Alexei Ramirez's two-run double made it 10-8. But Dotel got Dayan Viciedo to fly out to the right-field fence for his first save in two chances.

Chicago starter Jake Peavy sailed into the sixth with a 6-0 lead before Cabrera hit a two-run homer. Raburn hit a three-run drive off Peavy and Jackson connected against Will Ohman (0-2).

Braves 6, Reds 2

In Atlanta, the Braves moved to the top of the National League East division standings with a win over the Cincinnati Reds, setting up the victory with a four-run third inning.

Brian McCann homered, Michael Bourn had three hits and scored two runs and Martin Prado also had three hits for the Braves.

Reds starter Johnny Cueto (4-1) suffered his first loss of the season. He had led the major leagues with his 1.12 ERA before giving up six runs in four innings. He had allowed only one earned run over 23 innings in his previous three starts.

Atlanta starter Tim Hudson (2-1) gave up two runs in seven innings.

Diamondbacks 5, Dodgers 1

In Los Angeles, Wade Miley wiggled out of a couple jams while pitching into the seventh inning, steering Arizona to a victory that ended Los Angeles' five-game winning streak.

Miley (4-1) gave up only one run and one walk. He is 3-1 with a 2.35 ERA in five starts since being inserted into the rotation to replace the injured Daniel Hudson.

It was the Dodgers' first game since star center fielder Matt Kemp suffered a hamstring strain and was placed on the 15-day disabled list.

Los Angeles starter Chad Billingsley (2-3) gave up four runs in four innings.

Cardinals 7, Cubs 6

In St. Louis, Yadier Molina hit an RBI single off the second baseman's glove with two outs in the ninth inning, lifting St. Louis over Chicago and avoiding a series sweep.

The Cubs had tied it 6-6 in the top half of the ninth through Alfonso Soriano's overdue first homer of the season.

In the bottom of the inning, Matt Holliday singled off Rafael Dolis (2-3) and advanced on a groundout. Molina's grounder deflected off Darwin Barney's glove and rolled into shallow right field, and Holliday scored without a play at the plate.

Holliday and Matt Carpenter homered for St. Louis. Allen Craig had three hits and two RBIs and Tyler Greene snapped an 0-for-17 skid with three hits.

Jason Motte (2-1) got the win.

Brewers 8, Mets 0

In New York, Zack Greinke ran his scoreless streak to 15 innings, pitching Milwaukee past New York.

Greinke (4-1) was dominant for seven innings.

Travis Ishikawa homered twice for the Brewers: leading off the fifth, and a three-run shot in the sixth, both drives coming on the first pitch of the at-bat against Dillon Gee (2-3). He also had a run-scoring groundout in the second inning.

Marlins 6, Pirates 2

In Miami, Josh Johnson notched his first victory in more than a year, pitching Miami to victory over Pittsburgh.

Johnson (1-3) gave up two runs over seven innings. He had gone winless in 12 starts since his most recent victory. He missed the final 4-1/2 months of last season because of right shoulder inflammation.

Hanley Ramirez had three hits and two RBIs for the Marlins. Omar Infante tied a career high with four hits, including a two-run single, and John Buck singled home the other two runs.

Pittsburgh starter Kevin Correia (1-4) lasted only 3 2-3 innings, his shortest outing this year, and gave up a season-worst six runs.

Padres 6, Nationals 1

In Washington, Will Venable had four hits to power San Diego past Washington.

John Baker collected three hits and three RBIs for the Padres, while James Darnell hit his first homer of the season.

Nationals starter Stephen Strasburg (3-1) gave up four runs and left after only four innings, matching the second-shortest appearance of his career. His ERA rose from 1.64 to 2.25.

San Diego's Anthony Bass (2-4) — making his 10th start in the majors — tied his longest outing by going eight innings. He didn't allow a hit until the fourth and gave up only one run in all.

Phillies 4, Astros 3, 10 innings

In Philadelphia, Hunter Pence atoned for a ninth-inning error by hitting his second home run of the game, a solo shot in the 10th that lifted Philadelphia over Houston.

Pence connected against former Philadelphia closer Brett Myers (0-1) to give the Phillies their first three-game winning streak of the season—the longest they've had to wait to do so since 1971.

With two outs in the top of the ninth, Pence's bobble in right field while trying to make a throw to home allowed Houston to tie the game.

Phillies reliever Jake Diekman tossed 1 1-3 scoreless innings to win his major league debut.

Rockies 5, Giants 4

In San Francisco, Marco Scutaro hit a homer leading off the ninth inning, giving Colorado victory over error-prone San Francisco.

Scutaro smacked a fastball from Santiago Casilla (0-2) just over the left-field wall for his first home run of the season to rescue the game for the Rockies, who had given up a three-run lead in the eighth.

Troy Tulowitzki, Michael Cuddyer and Carlos Gonzalez each drove in a run as the Rockies took advantage of three Giants errors to snap a four-game losing streak.

Colorado's Rex Brothers (2-2) struck out two batters with the bases loaded in the eighth and took the win. Rafael Betancourt ended the game by striking out Nate Schierholtz looking with two men on base in the ninth.

Two-way tie in B Flame Tree Division

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

VFW Post 3457's Good Guys II and Jonny's Bar & Grill's Rehab are neck-and-neck for the lead in the Saipan Electronic Dart Association's B Flame Tree Division after the conclusion of last Thursday's matches.

Other Bud Light 2012 Winter-Summer Dart League division frontrunners are B Fanihi's DJ Fish of SOS Bar & Grill, Master Division's Ali'i Kamote of Es'y Kitchen, and C Division's Sparks out of Jonny's.

Good Guys II worked out a clutch 10-5 road victory over 19th Hole Bar & Grill's Dart Freaks (84-96) to grasp a share of the lead over the B Flame Tree field with division rival Rehab who notched a 9-6 win over the third place Skoregazzzums (103-77) held at Joe's Steakhouse.

Both leaders left Thursday with identical win-loss records of 105-75.

In other results, Jonny's Retsa Sakudi II! (95-85) doused The Water Front (79-101), 10-5, at home, while Bammy's Bar & Grill's Lilapuhing (77-103) clipped SOS's What U Got (72-108), 8-7, also at home.

Notables included a High In 160 by Good Guys II's Justin Mizutani and a High Out 120 by Retsa Sakudi II!'s Manny Ada.

Also on Thursday, DJ Fish peppered VFW's Dutty Gunz (78-102), 12-3, on the road and extended its lead over the B Fanihi field to 20 games. DJ Fish now holds 119-61 card.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
VFW Post 3457 Maharot Crew, seen here in a file photo, routed Bammy's Bar & Grill's Sabalu Boyz (68-136), 14-3, to gain a game on SEDA Master Division leader Ali'i Kamote last Wednesday.

Bammy's DRP2 (99-81) made it past Jonny's Adventurers (73-107), 9-6, at home to move into second place by a hair over SOS's Lights Out (98-82), who absorbed a stunning 5-10 upset at home compliments of Naked Fish Bar & Grill's IT&E-Na'Gupu (90-90).

Meanwhile, Es'y Kitchen's Kitchen Shooters (91-89) defeated Poseidon's One Shot (72-108), 12-3, in a home match.

Notables included a High In 160 by IT&E-Na'Gupu's Fred Salavaria and a High Out 118 by Kitchen Shooters' Edwin Orejola.

Last Wednesday, Ali'i Kamote cut through SOS' Mixblood Rookies I (95-109), 13-4, on the road to improve to 132-72.

VFW's second-ranked Maharot Crew (124-80) romped Bammy's Sabalu Boyz (68-136), 14-3, to gain a game on the frontrunners, while SOS' fourth place All-Stars (!08-96) grinded out an 8-7 upset over Bammy's Aces (113-91) and the Destroyers (106-98) lit up the D'Companeros (70-134), 13-4, in a road match at VFW.

Notables include a High In 170 by Ali'i Kamote's Jun Olita and a High Out 151 by Maharot Crew's Julian Camacho.

Also on Wednesday, the Sparks corralled Hafa Mas! (78-108), 12-3, on the road at Naked Fish to improve its overall record to 108-72. The team now holds a five-game lead atop the C Division. Bammy's second-ranked DRP (103-77) doubled up Oceanside Bar & Grill's Shooters V2 (84-96), 10-5, at home and remain a threat in the standings.

In other results, Oceanside's third place Shooters V1 (102-78) downed Naked Fish's Island Apparel-Oh MG! (86-94), 10-5, in a home match, while VFW's Party Rock (92-88) defeated 19th Hole's Hole In One (62-118), 9-6, also at home.

Notables include a High Out-135 by Shooters V1's Moody Zamora.

Delta, IP&E major sponsors for HANMI Golf Tourney

Delta Air Lines and IP&E have taken the lead as major sponsors of the 11th Annual HANMI Charity Golf Classic Tournament on June 2, 2012.

This year's fundraising tournament of the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands will be held at Mariana Country Club and is open to the first 144 paid registrants. For hole-in-one prizes, Delta Air Lines has donated two roundtrip tickets to the U.S. or Honolulu, while IP&E is putting up $10,000 cash. If not won on the course, the airline tickets will be raffled off at the awards dinner that night.

"We thank Delta Air Lines and IP&E for their tremendous support," said tournament chair Takahiro Omori. "We'd love to see another hole-in-one winner this year, and we're looking forward to a great tournament benefiting CNMI charities."

Previously, HANMI has supported NMI Crime Stoppers, the Department of Public Safety bike patrol program, PAWS, the Chinatown skatepark, the Victims Assistance Fund benefiting victims of the 2009 shooting incident on Saipan, Saipan Marathon, and other community causes.

HANMI has also allocated $20,000 toward the Mt. Tapochau Development Project being undertaken by the Marianas Visitors Authority.

Registration forms for the tournament are available at Mariana Country Club, Coral Ocean Point Resort,, Laolao Bay Golf Resort, Fiesta Resort & Spa, and Hyatt Regency Saipan.

Early bird tournament fee is $100 for payments received by 5pm on May 31. The fee includes green fee and the awards banquet. The fee increases to $120 on June 1. For an additional $20, players may also compete for nearest to the pin, most accurate drive, and longest drive.

The tournament will start at 7am and is limited to the first 144 paid registrants.

The tournament features six categories—Championship Flight, A Flight, B Flight, C Flight, Seniors (55 years-and-over), and Ladies. Players in the Championship Flight must have 0-5 handicaps, while those in A Flight are 6-10 handicappers.

The B Flight is for players with 11-17 handicap, while C Flight are for players with handicap 18 and up.

First place winners of all flights will receive $500, a trophy, and a hotel stay at one of the HANMI member hotels. Second place finishers will receive $300 and a trophy, and third place winners will receive $200 and a trophy. Winners (champion, first runner-up, and second runner-up) for the female golfers will be determined using the double Peoria handicap system. ***(HANMI)***

NMASA

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ity's director is equivalent to the current salary of the chief of the Division of Sports and Recreation, while the amount requested for his staff will cover the salaries of three staff members.

"Staff members will be responsible for supervising the facilities at the Susupe [Oleai] Sports Complex at all hours when they are in use, including evenings; and providing secretarial and administrative assistance to the executive director," said White in the letter.

In all, wages and salaries requested totaled $129,265, which included $17,312 for annual leave payouts, $6,2002 for social security contributions, $4,001 for retirement contributions, $1,450 for Medicare contributions, $210 for WCC contributions, and $60 for life insurance.

The biggest line item request, however, was for travel at $150,000, which will partly cover expenses the CNMI will incur to send athletes to off-island competitions.

"The figure budgeted for travel principally consists of funds for off-island sports travel. At a hearing at the Legislature earlier this year, NMASA was asked to take over the function of allocating funds for this purpose, so that the Legislature could avoid the necessity of dealing with, and possibly appropriating funds for off-island travel by a large number of groups each year. Once these funds are appropriated, the Legislature would no longer have to deal with those requests, and NMASA would be responsible for receiving and deciding upon requests for off-island travel expenses," White said in justifying the amount request for travel expenses.

The rest of the breakdown for NMASA's budget request is as follows: $72,000 for utilities; $42,000 for cleaning services; $36,000 for grounds maintenance; $9,000 for vehicles; $6,000 for equipment; and $2,400 for communications.

WANG

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trance into CWGA's finale Ace of Aces Tournament scheduled for April 2013.

Wang's 80 edged out runner-up Masaya Miyamoto and third place finisher Terry Guerrero by one stroke.

Miyamoto started out with a 41 and jotted down another 41 as she pulled into the clubhouse for an 82 gross total that earned her second place honors via handicap rule. Guerrero tallied a 92 raw count.

Notably, CWGA's new member Jeon Meae grossed a 79, tying fourth place finisher Yuko Togawa for the lowest net score of the day.

However, Meae's handicap is still being formulated. She had the lead at the turn last Saturday with a 38 and finished the backside with a 41. Togawa ended up with a 76 net total.

Established in March 2007, CWGA is a nonprofit organization founded to promote, encourage, and introduce women to the sport of golf in the CNMI.

The Top 10 place finishers of each monthly tournament are awarded 15 to 6 points, respectively, and all other participants are allotted one point.

The date of CWGA's June event will be announced when confirmed.

For more information, contact Terry Guerrero at 285-8374, Bennet Seman at 483-0126, Yuko Togawa at 287-9856, or Delores Yamagishi at 483-3195.

ALDAN

From Page 28

and 68 to average 93.25.

The Top 3 of Aldan, McKenzie, and Batac took $20, $15, and $10 for all their trouble.

Last Sunday, Raphael Zapanta and Ron Cal won the King and Queen of the Lanes titles of the year with pinfall totals of 864 and 681, respectively.

It was Zapanta's second and Cal's first victory in the monthly competition for 2012. The former won the King of the Lanes last February.

Other monthly winner so far in the year are Robert Talavera and Yho Villavicencio (January), Diane Camacho (February and March), Raymond Zapanta (April), and Lala Taitano (April).

The King, Queen, and Prince/Princess of the Lanes is sponsored by MARPAC and organized by the Saipan Bowling Association.

D-9ERS

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nine ahead of Brewers' Byron Kaipat (8), Yankees' Jerome Delos Santos (6), Sablan (5), and Pangelinan (5).

Delos Santos so far is the only player to have left the yard with a home run, while Yankees' Dave Camacho's two triples tops the field. Six others have one under their belts.

Celis, Juan Iguel, and Tenorio share a field-high of three doubles apiece, while the Yankees duo of Ben Jones and Bansil have crossed the plate a league-leading nine times each and lead Saralu (8), Tenorio (8), Sablan (7), and Ol'Aces' Juan Maratita (7).

Meanwhile, Brewers' Thomas Camacho has allowed just one earned run through 9 1/3 innings for a 0.96 Earned Run Average.

Yankees' southpaw phenom Joshua Jones (1.00) and Fielders' Brandon Santos (1.00) are both playing second fiddle behind Camacho with Brewers' Vince Cepeda (1.42), Ol'Aces' Benwachi Taisacan (2.25), and Angels' Franco Flores (2.50) well within range as the first round of games come to a close at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

Notably, Jones' 41 strikeouts through 18 innings tops the category ahead of Fielders' Elton Santos (33) and Cepeda (23).

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Baltimore	23	14	.622	–
Tampa Bay	23	14	.622	–
New York	20	16	.556	2 1/2
Toronto	19	18	.514	4
Boston	17	19	.472	5 1/2
Central Division				
Cleveland	20	16	.556	–
Detroit	18	18	.500	2
Chicago	17	20	.459	3 1/2
Kansas City	15	20	.429	4 1/2
Minnesota	10	26	.278	10
West Division				
Texas	23	14	.622	–
Oakland	19	18	.514	4
Los Angeles	16	21	.432	7
Seattle	16	22	.421	7 1/2

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division				
Atlanta	23	14	.622	–
Washington	22	14	.611	1/2
New York	20	16	.556	2 1/2
Miami	19	17	.528	3 1/2
Philadelphia	18	19	.486	5
Central Division				
St. Louis	21	15	.583	–
Cincinnati	18	17	.514	2 1/2
Pittsburgh	17	19	.472	4
Milwaukee	16	20	.444	5
Chicago	15	21	.417	6
Houston	15	21	.417	6
West Division				
Los Angeles	24	12	.667	–
San Francisco	18	18	.500	6
Arizona	16	21	.432	8 1/2
Colorado	14	21	.400	9 1/2
San Diego	13	24	.351	11 1/2

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

2012 CNMI Junior Tennis Championships

PHOTOS By MARK RABAGO

Christian Miller serves against Rafael Jones in the finals of the boys 18-and-under division of the 2012 CNMI Junior Tennis Championships last May 6 at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

Boys 13-and-under champions Steven Goodwin and Michael Ren, right, pose with runners-up Haruyo Eda and Vincent Tudela as coach Jeff Race looks on.

Girls 13-and-under champions Neghar Rastguiy and Emily Jones, right, pose with runners-up Tania Tan and Mimi Sakano.

Negahr Rastguiy in action against Mikayla Lopez in the finals of the girls 15-and-under division.

Boys 15-and-under champion Christopher Cajigan, right, poses with runner-up Carl Dela Cruz during the awards presentation last May 6 at the AMP.

Girls 15-and-under champion Mikayla Lopez, right, poses with runner-up Negahr Rastguiy.

Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association president and CNMI national coach Jeff Race calls out the start of the awards ceremony alongside tournament director Angelo Jones.

Rafael Jones waits for Christian Miller to serve in the finals of the boys 18-and-under.

Girls 12-and-under champion Carol Lee, right, poses with runner-up Isabel Heras.

Rested Spurs win Game 1 over weary Clippers

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Lawrie ejected after wild rage, Rays beat Jays

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NMASA asks for $486K budget from Legislature

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Northern Marianas Amateur Association is asking the Legislature for a budget of $486,665 for fiscal year 2013 to take over the operations of the Oleai Sports Complex from the Division of Sports and Recreation.

White

In the same April 27 letter to House Speaker Eli C. Cabrera (R-Saipan) and Senate President Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota) where the CNMI sports governing body reiterated its statutory responsibility to operate the sports facility, NMASA president Michael A. White broke down and explained where its budget request would be spent.

White, for instance, detailed that $60,029 will go toward the wages of the facility's administrative assistants, while $40,000 will pay for the salary of the Oleai Sports Complex director.

The NMASA president said the salary request for the facil-

See NMASA on Page 26

D-9ers' Lizama tops batting, Brewers' Camacho leads pitching

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The D-9ers' Isiah Lizama is the Saipan Major League Baseball Association's current batting leader with seven hits in 10 at bats for a dependable 0.700 batting average as of last week.

Sluggers Jesus Iguel (6-for-12 /0.500) of the Ol'Aces, Angles' John B. Reyes (5-for-10/0.500), Ol'Aces' Juan Iguel (5-for-10/0.500), Brewers' Manny Sablan (7-for-14/0.500), Yankees' Chris Camacho (6-for-13 /0.462), Brewers' Mike Pangelinan (6-for-13/0.462), IP&E Fielders' Jimmy Brel (5-for-11/0.455), Ol'Aces' Mike Iguel (6-for-14/0.429), Yankees' Robert Bansil (6-for-14/0.429), Brewers' Roy Celis (6-for-14 /0.429), and Fielders' Anthony Tenorio (7-for-17/0.412) are all batting above 0.400.

Camacho leads in RBIs with

See D-9ERS on Page 26

D-9ers' Isaiah Lizama follows through on a chopper up the middle in Monday's SML game against the Angels at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

Wang takes CWGA May tourney

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI Women's Golf Association members gather for a group photo during their May Ace of the Month Tournament last Saturday at the Laolao Bay Golf Resort.

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

Xiao Lin Wang came away the winner of the CNMI Women's Golf Association's May Ace of the Month Tournament held last Saturday at the Laolao Bay Golf Resort's west course.

Wang sprung out to the front of the 18-member pack with a 39 on the first nine holes and finished her round with a 41 for a solid gross card of 80.

She finished with a 72 after the handicap adjustment and earned the first bragging rights of the 2012 season as well as en-

See WANG on Page 26

Aldan is May Prince of Lanes winner

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

M.J. Aldan fired a tournament-high 212 in his third game en route to winning the Fiji Water Prince/Princess of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament for May last Sunday at the Saipan Bowling Center.

It was the third straight month that Aldan was hailed Prince of the Lanes after also triumphing in March and April.

The youth bowler shot pedestrian scores of 151 and 157 in his first two games before exploding for 212 in the third before capping his four-game series with a quiet 145. He finished with 665 pinfalls for a 166.25 average.

Sixty-seven pins behind Aldan and in second place was January and February winner Marion McKenzie, who came away with a 598 total built around rolls of 152, 153, 122, and 171 for a 149.5 average.

Ryan Batac and Marcel McKenzie complete the four-player Prince/Princess field last Sunday and the two finished with 541 and 373 pinfalls, respectively.

Batac rolled scores of 144, 147, 125, and 125 to norm 135.25, while the younger McKenzie had 99, 103, 103,

See ALDAN on Page 26

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Fiji Water Prince of the Lanes for May M.J. Aldan is flanked by Marion McKenzie and Ryan Batac after last Sunday's roll-off at the Saipan Bowling Center.